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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, accept our praise and thanksgiving. You have been better to us than we deserve, for Your goodness and mercy pursue us each day. Great is Your faithfulness.

Lord, increase the faith of our lawmakers. Inspire them to believe that You can empower them to succeed in their striving to keep our Nation strong. Fill them with reverential awe as You thwart the schemes of the enemies of freedom. May our Senators comprehend the fact that Your intentions will prevail.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Karen Erika Donfried, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (European Affairs and Eurasian Affairs).

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

DEBT LIMIT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, Senate Democrats blocked a vote on a clean government funding piece of legislation. Senator SHELBY and I put forward legislation that could pass the Senate easily and keep the government open. We were ready to avoid a shutdown, get urgent relief to Louisiana, help vetted Afghans who helped America, and continue supporting Israel's Iron Dome, which saves innocent lives.

Senate Republicans were ready, and House Democratic leaders say they will act on whatever CR we send them. But Democrats blocked the Senate from even considering our legislation. Instead, the Democratic leader held a vote that he knew would fail on a bill he knew was a nonstarter—game-playing instead of governing.

So look, Mr. President, for more than 2 months—2 months—Republicans have explained that the unified Democratic Party government will not get bipartisan support for a debt limit hike

while they write a partisan taxing-and-spending spree behind closed doors. It is as simple as that.

Bipartisanship isn't a light switch that Democrats can switch on when they need to borrow money and flip off when they want to spend money. If Democrats want to use fast-track, party-line procedures to ram through trillions more in inflationary socialism, they will have to use the same tools to handle the debt limit. They have known this for more than 2 months. I made it perfectly clear 2 months ago.

The debt suspension that expired in August covered all the debt that had been actually accumulated by that date. Let me say that again. The debt suspension that expired in August covered all the debt that had been accumulated by that date. This is an argument not about the past but about the future, a future that Democrats have willfully decided they want to own on a party-line basis.

There is no constant tradition that says one-party governments get bipartisan help with the debt limit. That has been said over and over by the press, by the Democrats. Let me make it clear. There is no constant tradition that says one-party governments get bipartisan help with the debt limit.

Just between 2003 and 2010, there were five—five—occasions when the party in power had to get a debt limit hike through the Senate by themselves—five times. Interestingly enough, then-Senators Biden and SCHUMER voted no on raising the debt limit under President Bush 43 and made the united Republican government do it by themselves.

So, look, it is time for our Democratic colleagues to stop dragging their heels and get moving. They have had more than 2 months to accept it. Secretary Yellen just announced a new estimate that action on the debt limit may be necessary as early as October 18. Democrats will need to handle the debt limit before then.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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But Democrats in Congress don't seem to be acting with any urgency. The Senate spends day after day on midlevel nominations, and our colleagues spend all their time in backroom talks over partisan plans while their basic duties sit here in limbo. So far, Democrats' partisan ambitions have taken precedence over basic governance. That needs to change. According to their own Treasury Secretary, they have a few weeks to finally get moving.

BUDGET

Mr. President, now, on a related matter, while Washington Democrats neglect basic governance, they are still trying to write another reckless taxing-and-spending spree behind closed doors. Many details are still fuzzy, but one basic truth is very clear: Their far-left wish list will hurt families and help China—new pain and new burdens for American families, and new advantages for competitors like China.

Take, for example, the Democrats' radical anti-energy agenda that is downstream from the Green New Deal. This sprawling plan for more Washington intrusion into families' everyday lives is set to upend the reliable and affordable domestic energy that literally drives our country. The Democrats' effort to enforce elite liberal fashions would directly target the jobs and the industries that support some of the hardest working blue-collar communities in our country.

Some families would lose their livelihoods altogether. Many more would face higher heating bills, higher electric bills, and higher prices to put gas in their cars. Democrats want to tear a big hole in Americans' wallets, right where they can least afford it.

Right now, as we speak, many of our allies in Europe are preparing for major energy disruption this coming winter. Here are a few recent headlines:

Europeans brace for hard winter as energy price surge hits households.

Empty shelves, gasoline shortages and sky-high energy prices? Britain is facing a 'difficult winter.'

Germans' Green Energy Resolve Faces Pain in Post-Election Winter.

And from just yesterday:

Europe's Energy Crisis Is Coming for the Rest of the World, Too.

This is no time for America to declare war on our own independence, on the affordable forms of energy that power our country. The rest of the world is battenning down the hatches for a global natural gas crunch that could leave entire countries rationing winter heat, and President Biden wants to let radical progressives declare war on American fossil fuels? Really? Is this a joke?

The latest taxing-and-spending spree would open multiple new fronts in the Big Government war on fossil fuels. It would make our electricity grid more like California's: higher costs, less reliability, and more blackouts. It would slap countless new costs and fees on domestic production and ban important

prospects for U.S. drilling. It would double down on the Obama administration's ham-fisted effort to police emissions that was so legally bizarre it couldn't get past the Supreme Court.

American families and American workers benefit from energy that is affordable and abundant. Washington Democrats are pursuing far-left policies that would reduce supply and jack up prices.

So Democrats' plans would have American families hurting badly, but it is not even like all this sacrifice would buy us some big national advantage. It is just the opposite. Their proposals would be a huge gift—a huge gift—to adversaries like Russia and China. They would set the United States back on the global stage.

To give just one example, the Democrats are drafting blunt mandates for more solar panels. Somebody should tell our colleagues that China currently supplies about three-quarters of the world's solar panels. They have also largely cornered the market on some of the necessary raw materials and critical minerals.

So, look, we are going to borrow money from China to send a windfall right back to Chinese miners and manufacturers? Is that the master plan? I am not sure any of these ideas have received more than 5 minutes of thought, but in a matter of days they want to turn all these hair-brained schemes actually into law, and the Chinese solar bailout is just one example.

Let's look at the big picture. Countries that wish us harm will be thrilled to see America make ourselves less competitive and more reliant on imports. They will go roaring by us, increasing their prosperity and emissions, no matter what we do. It hurts families. It helps China.

A war on American energy just as the rest of the world is steeling for shortages—this is just one piece of the Democrats' reckless taxing-and-spending spree, along with historic tax hikes, more intrusion into family lives, and new IRS snooping in every citizen transaction over a few hundred dollars—hurting families and helping China.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, last night was a low point in the recent history of this Chamber. With the government shutdown only days away and a default crisis coming in a matter of weeks, the Senate was faced with a simple and urgent question: Shall the

Members of this Chamber allow the Federal Government to pay its debt and stay open, or will its Members accelerate our country toward a shutdown and a first-ever default?

Yesterday, we got our answer. Republicans voted unanimously—unanimously—to block legislation to keep the government open and prevent an unnecessary default on our debt.

Republicans are now the official party of default, the party that says America doesn't pay its debts; the party that runs up the balance on the credit card, receives an invoice in the mail, and sends the bill straight to the shredder.

No average family could get away with what the Republicans are trying to do; that is for sure. But Republicans here shrug their shoulders and say: We incurred the debt, but we don't have to pay it. Republicans would let the country default for the first time in history, and it will be the American people who pay the price.

Now, Republicans have said for weeks—for weeks—that the United States must never be allowed to default. They said the debt ceiling, of course, needed to be raised. They said to do so otherwise was to play with fire. But when given the chance to actually put the fire out, Republicans chose to spray it with gasoline instead. And now our country is staring down the barrel of two Republican-manufactured crises: a government shutdown and a default on the national debt.

But, fortunately, there is an easy way to stave off disaster. Last night, the Republican leader—I believe he did again this morning—last night and this morning, the Republican leader cited an example from the 2000s, during which Republicans held unified control of government and provided the votes to increase the debt limit. The Republican leader said that example was "exactly the situation we are in now."

What Leader MCCONNELL conveniently left out is that back then, there was a consent agreement, requested by the Republican majority leader, that cleared the path for the Senate to vote to increase the debt limit at a majority threshold—only one party—allowing the minority party to vote no but also preventing a catastrophic default.

Let me be clear: I am still of the belief that addressing the debt limit, which includes debts incurred by both parties, should be done in a bipartisan way. But let's see if Leader MCCONNELL truly wants what he is asking for, truly wants what he favorably looked upon as happening in the early 2000s to allow to happen again.

Later this afternoon, I will ask unanimous consent for the Senate to hold a vote to increase the debt limit at a majority threshold. In other words, we would get consent that you only need 50 votes, not 60, on this vote to increase the debt limit. And that is what happened in the past.

It would be very similar to the process that Leader MCCONNELL cited yesterday, favorably, which allowed for

the debt limit to be increased without the minority party providing any of the votes needed to do so.

So if Republicans want to abscond from their responsibilities, not vote to pay the debt they incurred, so be it. That is a bad thing. It is a bad precedent. But this is the way out. It is a way out. It is a straightforward proposition: If Republicans really want to see the debt ceiling raised without providing a single vote, I am prepared to hold that vote. I can't imagine the Republican leader would object to his own request—his own request.

DEBT LIMIT

Now, taking a step back, Mr. President, we need to remember we didn't need to be in this position at all. We could have been well on our way to resolving these avoidable crises last night. The debt ceiling has been raised 80 times over the past 60 years under both Democratic and Republican Presidents, under both unified and divided government.

Ten years ago, Republican opposition to extending the debt ceiling was considered a fringe, a radical idea. The Republican Speaker at the time called the notion of holding the debt ceiling hostage to political ends "insanity."

The Republican leader himself 2 years ago said we needed to raise the debt ceiling because "America can't default," otherwise that would be a disaster. His words.

Well, after last night, it is clear "insanity" and "disaster" are now the Republican Party line, and it is endangering the very bedrock upon which both our economic viability and financial credibility stand.

I hope that our Republican colleagues can walk us back from the ledge in a few hours, but it is a sad state of affairs to see one of America's two major political parties so casually, so gleefully playing with the livelihoods of tens of millions of Americans, all for basically a cheap political goal.

Democrats, meanwhile, are not going to abscond from these core responsibilities. Keeping the government open and preventing default is vital to our country's future, and Democrats are going to make sure we do not lapse on either, in spite of the dangerous path Republicans have chosen to take us on.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am glad that the Democratic leader came to the floor after the Republican leader. He certainly clarified some of the statements that were made by Senator McConnell and brought a dose of reality into the picture. I listened carefully to Senator McConnell's speech, and I was waiting for one word. I knew he would say it at some point, and yet I don't think he did. I might have missed it, but I don't think he ever used the word "filibuster"—"filibuster," the requirement of 60 votes to proceed with the business of the Senate.

The reason why that is essential is the Democrats are prepared to accept the responsibility of funding the government and dealing with our national debt, acknowledging our debt ceiling. And if the Republicans don't care to be part of that conversation—or to engage in it, that is their wish—that is what they can have. But Senator McConnell has put in a filibuster, a requirement of 60 votes, which makes it literally impossible for the Democrats on their own to accept their responsibility. He didn't mention that the entire time.

I think we have reached a new low point in the U.S. Senate, where the Republican leader and his followers, to a person, are prepared to jeopardize the economy of the United States for purely political reasons. We know that this filibuster means we need Republican votes to move this measure. And he has made it quite clear that he won't give those votes, at least as of yesterday. I can only hope that Republican Senators going home, maybe this weekend, hearing from their constituents and businesses, will have second thoughts about this and accept that bipartisan responsibility that we all face.

There is a second you had to listen very carefully to catch with Senator McConnell's opening statement. He went on to say at great length that the last time we passed a debt ceiling extension was in August. And, he said, incidentally, all the spending leading up to August was covered by that debt ceiling. Well, that may have been true. What did he fail to tell us? There was another bill that he voted for, Trump supported, the Republicans supported, and the Democrats voted for, too, in December for \$900 billion in spending. That wasn't covered by the earlier August debt ceiling. He knows that. So to say all the debt of the Trump administration has been taken care of just isn't the fact. And I am glad we have a chance to clarify that.

He seems to think that we are going to "hurt families and help China" if we press forward with the reconciliation bill. Does it hurt families to find an affordable way to have quality daycare for their kids? I don't think so. Does it hurt families when children get a chance for pre-K education so they are ready for school when the day comes? Does it hurt families when we extend education from K-12 to K-14 and say to our community colleges, We are going to give you a mission: Prepare the workforce for the 21st century? Give these Americans the skills they need for a good paycheck and a home and a family and a future.

According to the Senator from Kentucky, that hurts American families. I think he is just flatout wrong. It helps them in critical ways. It really addresses expenses and challenges they face and need a helping hand to succeed.

And in terms of helping China, a competitive American workforce, investment in research and innovation does not help China. If we invest in this

country, in its people and its ideas, we have always succeeded and led the world.

So I disagree with the Senator from Kentucky completely. His approach—tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans, corporations that, frankly, can escape any tax liability—hasn't worked. And it won't work. It is fundamentally unfair, and it fails to invest in the people that need it the most: working families, middle-income families, children and their future.

(Mr. PADILLA assumed the Chair.)

IMMIGRATION

Mr. President, coincidentally, last Friday, you and I made a trip to Chicago.

Senator PADILLA, as chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee of Judiciary, joined me in visiting one of the most amazing neighborhoods in the city. We spent the day in Little Village, a neighborhood in the southwest part of the city known as the "Mexican Capital of the Midwest."

During our visit, we walked down 26th Street, the commercial heart of Little Village. It is lined with more than 100 family-owned shops and restaurants. People travel from all over the country to try their homemade tamales, stop for their quinceañera dresses, and experience a little slice of Mexico right here in America.

Families who own the businesses on 26th Street are proof that the American dream is alive and well.

Remember La Chiquita Grocery? I think that the founder—I guess it was almost 35 years ago—took the venture of opening a grocery store and now has seven or eight of them in the region. And they are so proud of their anchor store that we were guests in, to show us all the things available to folks in the neighborhood.

Whether these folks arrived in our country a few years ago or a few generations ago, these families contribute to the economic vitality of the city of Chicago every day. Little Village, that we visited, is a major economic engine in Chicago. That 2-mile stretch of 26th Street is the second highest grossing shopping district in all of Chicago. And those family-run businesses generate nearly \$1 billion in sales each year.

Bilingual communities like Little Village make America richer and stronger, culturally and economically. They are living proof that immigrants are still an essential part of America's future. And there are millions of people who have been contributing to our economy and our communities for years. But they have been left behind by our broken immigration system.

That is exactly what the Presiding Officer and I, along with many of our colleagues in the Democratic caucus—that is exactly what we are trying to include as an immigration reform in the Build Back Better package that will come before the Senate in the coming days.

Let me tell you about one of these immigrants that we are focused on.

Roughly 10 miles south of where Senator PADILLA and I toured Little Village, there is a trauma center, Advocate Christ Medical Center. It is one of the busiest in Chicago's South Side.

One of the doctors who recently completed his residency in that trauma center is Dr. Manuel Bernal Mejia. During this pandemic, Dr. Bernal has been saving lives every day in the emergency room. He cared for Chicagoans at all stages of life, from delivering babies to providing comfort to patients during their last moments. And he has cared for more COVID patients than he can count.

It is in our country that Dr. Bernal works every day to take care of our friends and loved ones; it is in our country that Dr. Bernal graduated from college and medical school; and it is in our country that Dr. Bernal has lived since he was 2 years old.

Despite that, Dr. Bernal, who is now an emergency room physician in nearby Rockford, has still been left behind by our broken immigration system. And there are thousands more just like him.

According to the definition established by former President Trump, there are more than 200,000 DACA recipients that have served as "essential critical infrastructure workers" during the pandemic. That includes more than 40,000 healthcare workers like Dr. Bernal. Some of them work in emergency rooms like him and others as nurses, paramedics, respiratory therapists.

So let's ask a basic question when it comes to immigration. Would America be better? Would Illinois be better? Would Chicago be better without Dr. Bernal? All of the Dreamers who are working every day to save American lives in our hospitals? I don't think so.

For Dreamers like Dr. Bernal, DACA has been a lifeline. It has given them a chance to give back to the only home they have ever known. But we all know DACA is not a permanent solution. The reality is, Dreamers have been standing on shaky ground for far too long.

These young people are the best. They defend us as members of our military, care for our parents and family members as home health aides, and they teach our children in school. But because Congress has failed to fix our broken immigration system, Dreamers with DACA can only plan their lives in 2-year increments. And every day, they live in fear that the rug is going to be pulled out from under them at any moment. It happened under President Trump. He tried to eliminate the program. It was finally saved at the highest Court in the land across the street, in the Supreme Court.

Dreamers and immigrants like them, who give everything they can to our country, deserve a path to legal status. The fact is, their future is our future.

As I mentioned, the budget reconciliation package the Senate is expected to vote on soon contains President Biden's Build Back Better Plan, a blue-

print for our Nation to mount an enduring economic recovery.

The proposals included in that plan would supercharge our economy by cutting taxes for working families; making childcare, healthcare, and transportation more affordable; providing a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants.

Let me say that another way. Immigration reform would drive our Nation's economic recovery for years to come. A pathway to legal status for Dreamers, TPS recipients, and essential workers could boost our Nation's GDP by \$1.5 trillion over the next 10 years—\$1.5 trillion.

Additionally, a path to legalization could create 400,000 new jobs and increase every American's annual wage by an estimated \$600. How can that be? Putting these immigrants to work on the payroll, how could that help other people? Because we have a dynamic economy, and what we saw on 26th Street in Chicago can be replicated over and over again if these new immigrants are given a chance to work hard, as they all do, show their skills, and build the economy around them. Our Nation is leaving billions, if not trillions, of dollars on the table by failing to fix our broken immigration system.

Earlier this month, the White House published a report that found that providing a path to permanent legal status would "allow . . . currently unauthorized immigrants to pursue and accept jobs for which their skills are well-suited." Many of these immigrants are of prime working age, which means they could help grow our Nation's tax base for the foreseeable future. That is money that can go towards shoring up Social Security, Medicare, and funding our Nation's priorities. In fact, leading economists have argued that America needs immigrants to keep these programs solvent.

In the words of Mark Zandi, Moody's chief economist, the United States is "not going to be able to address our fiscal problems . . . if we don't change our policy with regard to immigration." He is not alone. Other economists agree. Douglas Holtz-Eakin, president of the right-leaning American Action Forum, has argued that, in the absence of immigration, America will "shrink in population . . . become older, and . . . become less important on the world stage."

With the Build Back Better plan, this Senate is finally taking up the important work investing in America's future. That means building railroads and transit networks that will connect communities and providing funding for high-quality childcare so every parent can have a safe place to leave their child during the workday. It also means providing immigrant families the stable footing they need to contribute to our future.

For these families, make no mistake, America is home. Every day, they help to make our communities better and

our economy stronger. That is the case we plan on making to the Senate Parliamentarian once again. This is the first opportunity we have had in a long, long time to begin building an immigration system that works for America. And for our own sake, I hope we can get it done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last night's vote was an exercise in futility, as Democrats knew would be the case.

For months now, Republicans have made it clear that we will not help Democrats raise our Nation's debt limit to finance Democrats' partisan tax-and-spending spree. If Democrats want to pass a massive, partisan tax-and-spending bill without Republican input, they can raise the debt limit without Republican input.

Democrats, of course, have complained they can't raise the debt limit by themselves. The truth is that they don't want to do it by themselves. Democrats want the credit for their social policies and the government handouts they are planning, but they don't want to own the pricetag.

Democrats are talking about engaging in a wild, reckless spending spree that will worsen our inflation problem, threaten economic growth, and substantially increase the government's control over Americans' lives. Republicans can't support that kind of legislation, and we are not going to help Democrats increase the credit card limit to pay for it. If the Democrats want to raise the debt limit, they have to do it by themselves.

I have come down to the floor more than once to talk about the reckless spending and the massive tax hikes the Democrats are planning. I could spend the rest of my time here on the floor today talking about the irresponsible amount of money Democrats want to spend and the tax hikes they are proposing, but today, I want to look at things a little differently.

Last week, House Speaker PELOSI had this to say in reference to the Democrats' \$3.5 trillion spending bill. She said:

It's not about a price tag. It's about values. It's not about a price tag. It's about values.

Mr. President, she is partially right because while the pricetag does matter, this is about more than just the pricetag. This is about values and visions—specifically, Republicans' and Democrats' different visions of government.

The Democrats' bill isn't just about spending money, even though it does spend money—a lot of it. It is about a

specific vision of government, one where the government is intimately involved in nearly every aspect of your life from, to quote the New York Times article on the Democrats' bill, "cradle to grave."

Someone once said to me that the difference between Democrats and Republicans is the Republicans believe in less government and more freedom; Democrats believe in less freedom and more government. I think that is a pretty accurate description of what we are seeing here.

Republicans oppose Democrats' tax-and-spending spree because it spends an irresponsible amount of money, but more than that—more than that—we oppose it because it moves us further and further away from the American idea of limiting government.

Our Founders established a limited government for a reason—because they respected individual liberty, and they knew that the heavier the hand of government, the less liberty Americans would enjoy. That is why our Constitution is as much about what government cannot do as what government can do.

Democrats might protest that they are not restricting individual liberty, that they are just providing a helping hand or redistributing wealth, but when you expand the reach of government, the diminishment of liberty is inevitable. When government gets involved in a new area of life, it rarely, if ever, just comes with the benefits; it comes in with rules and regulations and mandates.

Take Democrats' childcare benefit. Democrats are preparing to offer childcare subsidies to parents around the country, but it is not as simple as just taking some money from the government and going out and purchasing childcare because it turns out the Democrats are changing decades-old childcare funding programs to favor secular childcare providers who provide care at daycare centers. If you prefer to choose a faith-based provider for your child, you may be out of luck.

A 2020 Bipartisan Policy Center survey found that among parents who used center-based childcare, 53 percent used a faith-based center—53 percent. They reported that they chose these providers for a variety of reasons, from the quality of the caregivers, to the cleanliness of the facility, to the values of the provider. That number may change when Democrats' tax-and-spending plan goes into effect, not because parents are changing their childcare preferences but simply because Democrats have set up their benefit to favor secular center-based childcare providers.

With government benefits come government control and government picking the winners and the losers. Secular childcare providers win under Democrats' massive government expansion; faith-based providers and parental choice, not so much. Electric vehicle manufacturers win; the natural gas and

biofuels industries, not so much, despite the fact that both have been key to producing cleaner American energy. Unions win under this bill; Americans making charitable donations, not so much. Democrats are allowing the charitable deduction to expire but adding a new tax break to pay for union dues. When government is in charge, government dictates your choices and picks winners and losers.

Government also gets a lot more involved with overseeing the details of your personal life. Democrats are planning to add a provision that would force banks and credit unions to report the details of your financial activity to the IRS, including certain deposits, withdrawals, and other transactions. Democrats are apparently still discussing the amount that would trigger the new reporting requirement, which has been proposed at \$600 or \$10,000, but whichever number they settle on, a lot of ordinary Americans are going to end up having their bank or credit union forced to report their private information to the IRS. Talk about Big Brother.

Probably the biggest reason that Republicans believe in limited government is because we believe in individual liberty, and we know that the more government expands into your life, the more your choices and liberties are curtailed. But there are other reasons that we believe in limited government.

One big reason is that we know that the Federal Government simply isn't the best way of delivering many services. There are some things that the Federal Government is well-suited to do—handling our national defense, for example. If our country is invaded or attacked, it is a lot more effective for our national military to respond rather than for each State to respond on its own. But there are a lot of other things that are better handled at the State level or at a local level or in some cases not by government at all.

Our State government in South Dakota is a lot more familiar with the needs of South Dakotans than the bureaucrats at Washington Agencies. The city government in Sioux Falls or Rapid City or Pierre or Box Elder is even more familiar with or more able to respond to the needs of individual residents. That is why a lot of things are better handled at the State or local level or, as I said, at times not by government at all.

Big Government is impersonal and inflexible. It is not familiar with and can't take into account particular and sometimes opposing needs of each State or each community. Big Government is one-size-fits-all.

Big Government is also inefficient. Anyone who thinks the Federal Government would do a good job running Americans' healthcare hasn't dealt with a Federal Agency very recently.

Big Government is unaccountable. Think about it. If you have a company that offers a bad product, what is going

to happen? People are not going to buy your product, and you are probably going to go out of business quickly. It doesn't work that way with the Federal Government. The Federal Government is not going to go out of business because it isn't doing a good job delivering the services that are promised.

If the government is in charge of your healthcare and it isn't delivering quality healthcare, you have little recourse. Sure, you can try to vote in new Members of Congress to reform things, but even then, change can take a very long time. Real reform of an existing government program is rare. Elimination of a bad government program? Even rarer. As Ronald Reagan used to say, the nearest thing to eternal life that we will ever see on this Earth is a government program.

I could go on. I could talk about how Big Government tends to stifle the innovation that leads to economic growth or ask why Democrats think that a group of bureaucrats in Washington are the best decision makers for American families. But I want to touch on one other point before I close, and that is that Democrats believe in government dependence as the goal. They might dispute that characterization, but you only have to look at the tax-and-spending package that they are putting together to know that is their vision.

They envision a future where Americans rely on the government for everything from childcare, to education, to healthcare, and on and on. That is a vision with which Republicans fundamentally disagree. Our vision is not a future of government dependence because government doesn't bring prosperity. Government doesn't bring the American dream. At best, government is going to help you survive. It is not going to help you thrive.

Yes, government can be an important backstop in difficult situations or national emergencies, like the COVID crisis, but the goal should always be to get people to a place where they don't have to rely on government. Permanent government dependence robs people of the purpose and pride that comes with work and personal achievement, and, as I said, it denies them the opportunity for prosperity. No one ever became prosperous on government benefits.

If you asked most Americans what the American dream means to them, I am pretty sure you would hear things like a "good job," a "rewarding career," the "chance to pursue my ambitions," or the "chance to improve my circumstances and make life better for my children." That is what Americans envision, not a future of government dependence and government subsidies.

People are looking to achieve the kind of prosperity where they don't need government involvement in every aspect of their lives and can choose their paths for themselves instead of having to follow the rules and regulations that come with government benefits.

That is a vision that Republicans share, and it is what we are committed to fighting for on behalf of the American people. That is another reason we are committed to maintaining limited government, because the bigger government grows, the more that vision of opportunity and prosperity shrinks.

And so Speaker PELOSI is partially right. She is wrong to dismiss the bill's pricetag, because it is profoundly—profoundly—irresponsible to mortgage our children's and grandchildren's futures with a massive government spending increase, but she is right in that it is about values.

Now, Republicans aren't opposing Democrats' tax-and-spending spree simply because it spends a lot of money, but because it advances a vision of government with which we profoundly disagree. We don't believe that the American dream is government dependence; we don't believe in an ever-expanding role for the Federal Government; and we don't believe that bureaucrats in Washington are a good substitute for the judgment of the American people.

That is why every Republican in the Senate will be voting against the Democrats' reckless spending legislation, not just because it spends too much money, but because it fundamentally undermines the American tradition of liberty and limited government. It is about values, and it is about visions, and Republicans do not share the Democrats' vision of a future of Big Government and Big Brother.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to conclude my remarks before the scheduled rollcall vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RUSSIA

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to continue the discussion that we have been having about the harms of Nord Stream 2.

I will discuss in this speech one of the administration's legal responsibilities, in particular to impose sanctions in a way that they are now defying those legal responsibilities.

I do want to note that every day brings new evidence of the incoherence of President Biden's sellout and surrender to Vladimir Putin. Since we last discussed this, elections have occurred in Germany and the government of Angela Merkel, on whose behalf the Biden administration claims to be acting, will now be replaced. So the entire surrender to Russia by Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS was for nothing. I will discuss that further throughout the day and throughout the week.

We have heard repeatedly from my Democratic colleagues that my actions to block some of President Biden's nominees are unprecedented. That accusation doesn't stand up to scrutiny. Senators routinely use their preroga-

tives, and, indeed, Democrats regularly engaged in massive obstruction over months and years of President Trump's nominations. What isn't unprecedented, however, is Joe Biden's open defiance and literal lawlessness in not imposing the sanctions mandated by multiple laws passed overwhelmingly by Congress.

Right now, I would like to talk about one of the laws that the President is violating: CAATSA—the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. Before getting into the details of Nord Stream 2, I would like to note a couple of things about CAATSA.

First, CAATSA was explicitly designed for the purpose of taking away the President's discretion whether or not to impose sanctions on Russia in cases where Congress had deemed it necessary to mandate them. And secondly, on that basis, CAATSA passed Congress with nearly unanimous support: 419 to 3 in the House, and 98 to 2 in the Senate.

As for the purpose of CAATSA, I would like to quote some of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle who were both clear and celebratory about the bill.

Senator MURPHY, who has been particularly loquacious in opposition to these holes, said about CAATSA: "It is not often that Congress takes away, from the president, discretionary powers on foreign policy."

Worth remembering.

Senator SCHUMER, who has also had more than a little bit to say on these holes, said that CAATSA was necessary because of what he described as the President's "seeming inability to deal with the many transgressions of Russia."

Gosh, Senator SCHUMER was right. We now have a President unwilling and unable to deal with, as he put it, the "many transgressions of Russia."

What about Senator MENENDEZ?

Senator MENENDEZ has stood on this floor, including at 4:00 and 5:00 and 6:00 in the morning, railing about these blocks.

Well, what did he say about CAATSA?

He said that CAATSA sent "the most powerful message in the world, that the United States—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—stand together."

Those were really fine sentiments. I wish they held true when there was a Democratic President as much as Senator MENENDEZ believed them when there was a Republican President.

And how about Senator DURBIN?

Senator DURBIN is never lacking an opinion on any topic. Here is what he said: "We had to tell them enough is enough, and when it came to the sanctions and trusting the president, we basically said we want to make sure the president will not lift these sanctions."

Well, do you know what? Senator MURPHY was right. Senator SCHUMER was right. Senator MENENDEZ was right. Senator DURBIN was right. That

is why Congress came together to pass CAATSA, tough legislation to prevent a President from doing what Joe Biden is doing right now: surrendering to Putin, surrendering to Russia, ignoring U.S. law, and giving Putin a multibillion-dollar gift.

And, when my Democratic colleagues didn't believe the Trump administration was implementing the full breadth of mandatory sanctions under CAATSA, they made the purpose of CAATSA even clearer.

On January 30, 2018, Senator CARDIN led a letter about CAATSA to then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, cosigned by 21 other Democrats—almost half of the caucus. They said that the Trump administration's failure to impose mandatory sanctions "do not fully reflect the clear congressional intent described in the legislation . . . We expect the administration to provide a full explanation as to why it has not imposed mandatory sanctions" under several provisions of CAATSA.

Then, on May 18, 2018, Senator MENENDEZ led a letter about CAATSA to several inspectors general, cosigned by two other Democrats. They said that "[s]everal mandatory provisions of the law have not been implemented . . . despite strong evidence that actions taken by or on behalf of the Russian government are in violation of the CAATSA sanctions law."

In fact, I would like to read more of that letter because it is so abundantly clear about the purpose of CAATSA:

In light of the apparent violations and the lack of corresponding sanctions actions, we are concerned about whether the sanctions implementation process within the administration is fulfilling CAATSA's mandate and intent. In general, with respect to mandatory measures, the President is required to make determinations in the event he has established that sanctions behavior has taken place, and then either impose sanctions or exercise a waiver.

So a binary choice: One or the other. That is what of a President is required.

And do you know what? Senator CARDIN and Senator MENENDEZ, well, they might have meant it, but they didn't say it: Only Republican Presidents are required to do this.

They didn't write that in their letters because, of course, CAATSA doesn't say that. What they said is a President is required to make that choice. The law requires the President to make that choice.

Senator CARDIN was right. Senator MENENDEZ was right. And Joe Biden is telling them: Go jump in a lake.

He is telling the U.S. Congress: Go jump in a lake.

He is telling the American people: Go jump in a lake.

He is cutting a deal with Putin, and don't bring no stinkin' laws to get in his way.

That brings to us Nord Stream 2. One of the provisions that my Democratic colleagues cited in both of those letters was section 228: "Sanctions with respect to certain transactions with foreign sanctions evaders and serious

human rights abusers in the Russian federation.”

Section 228 mandates the imposition of sanctions on any company that conducts any “significant transactions,” including “deceptive transactions,” for Russian companies that are already sanctioned.

There is no doubt—zero—that the company Nord Stream 2 AG, which is the company responsible for the planning, the construction, and the eventual operation of Putin’s Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, has committed acts that require the implementation and the imposition of those mandated sanctions under CAATSA 228.

Indeed, that is one of the many reasons the pipeline was halted for a year, and Putin only began building it again on January 24 of this year—4 days after Joe Biden was sworn in. Because Joe Biden has been so weak on this issue, because the pipeline exists only as a gift from Biden to Putin, this pipeline is, in a very real sense, the Biden-Putin pipeline.

We know that the Biden administration is defying the law, because the Biden administration told us so in May. The Biden administration sent a report to Congress describing how Nord Stream 2 AG had conducted deceptive transactions for sanctioned Russian companies. That is the explicit trigger in CAATSA for sanctions, and yet the Biden administration has refused to meet its obligations under CAATSA, and that leads to the reasonable compromise that I have offered.

For several months, I have had in place a hold on all State Department nominees and on several Treasury Department nominees as well. The reason for the hold has been simple—because Joe Biden is defying the law and is giving Vladimir Putin a multibillion-dollar gift that constitutes a generational geopolitical blunder that puts billions of dollars into the Russian coffers every year that Putin will use for military aggression against America and our allies. Biden’s surrender to Putin weakens Europe profoundly. It makes Europe dependent on Russia even more so for energy and subject to Russia’s energy blackmail. And it also, on top of that, destroys jobs here in the United States.

For months, I have had in place the blanket hold that has caused increasing cries of pain and dismay from our Democratic colleagues. Interestingly, these same Democratic colleagues all agree that what Biden is doing with the Biden-Putin pipeline is terrible. Almost to a person, the Democrats who are complaining about this have denounced Joe Biden for giving Putin this multibillion-dollar gift, but they say they want to confirm his nominees anyway.

So what I have said is: All right. Fine. If the Biden administration wants to defy the sanctions law that I drafted—the Cruz-Shaheen sanctions law, it is two different bills that I drafted with Senator SHAHEEN, Demo-

crat from New Hampshire. We passed into law, overwhelming bipartisan support from both Houses of Congress. If Joe Biden wants to ignore those laws, then there is another avenue to resolve much of this dispute, which is simply to follow the law under CAATSA.

So I extended an offer to Secretary Blinken, to Secretary Yellen, to the White House that I would lift my holds on every career State nominee and on the Treasury nominees where I placed holds in exchange for one of two things: No. 1, the best outcome would be for the Biden administration to actually implement CAATSA and sanction Nord Stream 2 AG, to follow the law, to do what is mandatory.

That would be the best outcome. If they did so, I would immediately lift my holds.

But, secondly, I get that the White House politically has decided they want to surrender to Putin on this. My understanding is there is an inter-agency process—the State Department argued to do the right thing. The State Department argued: Impose the sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG, stop this pipeline, which, by the way, is what Tony Blinken sat in my office and promised State would do. It is what just about every senior nominee to the State Department has promised they would do.

State argued to do the right thing, but according to public reports, the political operatives at the White House overruled their own State Department. They said: Never mind the national security interests of the United States. Never mind protecting America. Never mind stopping Putin and Russia. Never mind protecting Europe’s energy security. Never mind protecting Europe from blackmail by Putin. We want to surrender because Angela Merkel wants us to.

I talked last week about how a friend of mine jokes that the White House political team sleeps with votive candles of Angela Merkel under their beds. There is a view in the White House that what Merkel wants, Merkel gets, even if it is bad for America, bad for Germany, bad for Europe, but good for Russia.

Of course, Merkel is on her way out now, but they still want to do this surrender. And this surrender, by the way, if it is completed, will hurt America for generations to come—10 years, 20 years, 30 years from now.

The next Russian dictator will be enriched by Joe Biden’s surrender to Putin on the Biden-Putin pipeline.

The two options: First, after imposing sanctions, they could leave them in place. But, secondly, recognizing that they don’t want to do it, there is a second option I gave them, which is that they could impose sanctions under CAATSA, but then they could delist Nord Stream 2 AG.

In other words, they could exercise the political decision not to impose the sanctions. That gives them their policy—preferred policy outcome.

What it also does under CAATSA is it triggers an automatic congressional override vote.

So I told Secretary Blinken, I told Secretary Yellen: It is very easy. If you believe in this foolhardy policy of surrendering to Putin, then put your money where your mouth is. Follow the law, which is clear, unequivocal, black letter law. Impose the sanctions. And you do have a vehicle. You can delist it. The President can make a determination that even though the sanctions are mandatory, he wants to delist it.

But here is what Congress did. In CAATSA, it triggered an automatic congressional override vote. And what I have told the administration is: You know what. Whether I win or lose that override vote, if you actually follow the law in such a way that it triggers that vote, I will lift my holds—my holds on the career State nominees, my holds on the Treasury nominees. You have a path. Simply subject yourself to congressional oversight.

Now, it is very clear why they haven’t taken this offer, which has been in writing for months now. Because Joe Biden thinks if we had a vote in this Senate, he would lose. He thinks if we had a vote in the House, he would lose. He knows that Republicans would vote against him.

And if Democrats had a modicum of consistency, virtually every Democrat in this Chamber and the House has been unequivocal that the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline is devastating to U.S. national security. And so the Biden White House doesn’t want to risk members of his own party voting against his surrender to Russia. So, instead, they defy the law. That is an irresponsible course of action.

There is a very reasonable compromise on the table, and all of the perils the Democrats are lamenting about these holds can be avoided if, if, if Joe Biden will simply follow the law, follow CAATSA. The mandatory sanctions that Democrats explained were designed to prevent a President from doing what Joe Biden is doing right now, which is surrendering to Russia. There is a reasonable compromise on the table. All that is required is for Joe Biden to take it.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON NOMINATION OF KAREN ERIKA DONFRIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Donfried nomination?

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 386 Ex.]

YEAS—73

Baldwin	Grassley	Reed
Barrasso	Hassan	Risch
Bennet	Heinrich	Romney
Blackburn	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rounds
Blunt	Hoeven	Sanders
Booker	Johnson	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Burr	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Capito	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Collins	Markey	Tillis
Coons	McConnell	Toomey
Cornyn	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Cramer	Murkowski	Warnock
Crapo	Murphy	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Ossoff	Wyden
Fischer	Padilla	Young
Gillibrand	Peters	
Graham	Portman	

NAYS—26

Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Braun	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cruz	Lee	Sullivan
Daines	Lummis	Thune
Ernst	Marshall	Tuberville
Hagerty	Moran	Wicker
Hawley	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Feinstein

The nomination was confirmed.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Monica P. Medina, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:27 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. OSOFF).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to offer some brief remarks today in the wake of the Armed Services Committee hearing today on the evacuation of Afghanistan and the end to U.S. troop presence there. I watched it with some interest. I watched it knowing that three out of four Americans support President Biden's decision to bring U.S. troops home from Afghanistan.

We learned some new things today in the hearing. Others were confirmed. First, we learned, once again, of the extraordinary bravery and capability of our diplomats and our soldiers, who worked under incredibly difficult conditions for a period of weeks to airlift almost 130,000 individuals out of Afghanistan. That is absolutely remarkable, especially given, as we heard today in testimony, that the goal at the outset, in the best case scenario, was to get 60 to 70 to 80,000 people out. In the end, the United States of America, our military and our diplomats, got 130,000 people out.

We heard, also, about the impossible position that President Biden inherited; that there was a commitment made to withdraw American troops by President Trump but no plan with which to do it safely. We heard about how the Doha agreement decreased the readiness of the Afghan forces, how it weakened their position internally.

We heard about the choice that faced President Biden when he came into office. We heard about the fact that, had we chosen to stay, we would have had to surge troops; that the Taliban, having gotten to the precipice of provincial capitals, would have engaged in a level of urban warfare that would have required the United States to increase our troop presence there in order to be able to stand up an effective resistance to the Taliban.

To the extent that Republicans view this as a political game and they were looking for points to be scored today, I guess the one point they feel they scored was an admission by the generals who testified that some of them had recommended staying in Afghanistan.

Now, I have tremendous respect for our generals. I think they get it right more than they get it wrong. They provide very able advice to the Commander in Chief. But for 20 years, in Afghanistan, our generals recommended staying, in the face of mounting evidence, year after year, that it was going to be impossible to be able to stand up an Afghan military that could protect the country and an Afghan Government that could govern the country. Our generals recommended staying—year after year after year, month after month after month—despite the fact that many analysts told us that as soon as we left and the Taliban took over, the Afghan Government and the military would fall.

Now, they did it because our military is bred to believe that anything is possible. It speaks, in some part, to the best of American military ethos, the idea that there is no obstacle that cannot be surmounted, that cannot be climbed by U.S. forces. But the task they were given by President after President was one that could not be carried out.

And to simply believe that because the general said “stay another year” or “stay another 5 years,” this Com-

mander in Chief should have listened, despite the fact that it had been proven that the mission that we were given in that country was impossible, is to compound a mistake—an unnecessary mistake—that the United States engaged in for far, far too long.

And so my hope is that moving forward, this Congress and this Senate are going to engage in real oversight. There is no doubt the evacuation could have been done better. There is no doubt that, in a mission this complicated, the Biden team would have done things differently. But the real question is, Why did we stay in Afghanistan for 10 years too long? Why did we keep believing that we could train-up a military that would be capable of defending the country?

It is time that we have a deep inquiry in this Senate about the limits of American military power overseas and how badly misresourced we are when we spend 10 to 20 times as much money on military power as we do on other means of projecting American power.

It is also important for us to understand the cost of getting bogged down in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. It is not a coincidence that shortly after withdrawing from Afghanistan, we were able to announce this new partnership with Australia and Britain to better protect our mutual interests in the Pacific theater.

It is because, when the entirety of the U.S. defense and foreign policy infrastructure is so trained on unwinnable contests in far off places like Afghanistan, it doesn't allow us the capacity and the creativity to be able to design new systems and new structures with which to protect the country.

China celebrated every single year that we remain bogged down in Afghanistan. Russia celebrated every single year that we doubled down on that mistake. Now we have the ability to turn our attention to fights that truly matter.

We learned some things in the Armed Services Committee today. I think what we learned confirms that the decision that President Biden made to pull our troops out was the right one. It is a decision supported by the American people because it allows this country, finally, to focus on fights that are winnable in reality, not just on paper.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally to both sides.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2868

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, Senate Republicans voted unanimously to make a default and a shut-down far more likely and in doing so, solidified themselves as the party of default, the party that says America does not pay its debts.

Now, despite yesterday's stunning display of obstruction, the fact remains

that we need to raise the debt ceiling, and in a few moments, I will offer a way forward for us to avoid causing unnecessary and catastrophic default on the debt.

Over the last 2 days, the Republican leader has repeatedly cited an instance in the mid-2000s during which Republicans held full control of the government and voted by themselves to increase the debt limit. Here is what he said: That is “exactly the same situation we’re in now.” That is “exactly the same situation we’re in now.”

The Senate was able to raise the debt ceiling at that time because the then-Republican majority leader made a consent request to this body that cleared the way for the Senate to increase the debt limit by a majority threshold instead of requiring 60 votes to break a filibuster. The minority party, under this agreement, was able to vote no, which is what they claim they want to do, and the majority party was able to approve a debt limit extension and prevent a catastrophe.

So we are proposing the same thing today, the same thing the leader cited and said the situation is exactly the same. Simply allow for a simple majority threshold to raise the debt ceiling and avoid this needless catastrophe that Republicans have steered us toward. We are simply asking Senator McCONNELL to live by his own example.

We have given the Republicans what they want, and now the ball is in their court. Let’s see if Republicans truly want what they say they want. We are not asking them to vote yes. If Republicans want to vote to not pay the debts they helped incur, they can all vote no. We are just asking Republicans to get out of the way. Get out of the way when you are risking the full faith and credit of the United States to play a nasty political game.

We can bring this to a resolution today. Using the drawn-out and convoluted reconciliation process is far too risky—far too risky. Too many American families are at stake. Far better for us to solve this problem right here and right now.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that, at a time to be determined by the majority leader following consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 2868, a bill to suspend the debt limit, which was introduced earlier today; that there be 2 hours for debate equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill be considered read a third time and the Senate vote on the passage of the bill with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. McCONNELL. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, my colleague wants to discuss precedence

from a decade ago, but he and his colleagues have spent all year boasting that what Democrats are doing to the country and the economy is completely without precedent. I agree. What they are trying to do is completely without precedent. There is nothing normal—nothing normal—about Democrats using reconciliation multiple times to blow a \$5.5 trillion hole in the deficit without a single vote from our side. Debt limit increases like the one we saw in 2006 were not—I repeat, not—precursors to a massive blowout reconciliation package that Republicans were just waiting to shove down Democrats’ throats.

My colleague is trying hard to make this complicated. It is actually simple. I have said for more than 2 months that we will not help this unified Democratic government raise the debt ceiling. Democrats will not get bipartisan help borrowing money so they can immediately blow historic sums on a partisan taxing-and-spending spree.

The Democratic leader knew this request would fail. There is no chance—no chance—the Republican conference will go out of our way to help Democrats conserve their time and energy so they can resume ramming through partisan socialism as fast as possible. This Democratic government has spent months boasting about the radical transformation they are ramming through. They are proud of it. They have no standing whatsoever to ask 50 Republican Senators to make the process more convenient.

When the Democratic leader was recently in the minority, he made us file cloture on matters that weren’t one-tenth this controversial. We had to invoke cloture on nominees who went on to be confirmed with literally zero votes in opposition. But now the Democratic leader wants us to skip that step on something this controversial? Of course, that is not going to happen.

All year long, Democrats have wanted to control government spending all on their own. They wanted to be in the position they are in right now. They requested from the Parliamentarian and won extra flexibility to redo reconciliation. So, if Democrats want to use fast-tracked, party-line processes to spend trillions of dollars and transform the country, they will have to use the same tool to raise the debt ceiling.

Now, here is what Republicans will do: For the sake of the full faith and credit of our country, I am about to propose a different consent, one that will allow Democrats to start the budget process they will need to use to raise the debt ceiling. Our Democratic colleagues will need to do this alone, but I will propose an agreement to ensure the process can begin as soon as Democrats accept that this is the path they need to take.

Therefore, Mr. President, I ask the Senate to modify the request that has been made by the majority leader so that, in lieu of this proposal, if the Budget Committee reports out a 304

budget resolution with instructions to raise the debt limit or is discharged from consideration of such resolution, the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the majority leader so modify his request?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the Republican leader has offered virtually nothing. He keeps the same risky process in place. He is totally doing a 180-degree turn from what he has offered time and again. The Democrats vote yes without any Republican help, but he refuses to do that. He refuses to do that. Our proposal is fair. Our proposal is not risky, the way the Republican leader’s is, and his doesn’t change a darned thing.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. McCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

DEBT CEILING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, Senate Democrats just gave Republicans yet another opportunity to do the right thing—to make sure the U.S. Government pays its bills, like every working family in our country does.

Now, Senate Republicans have acknowledged that, even though default would be catastrophic for our economy, they would not vote to prevent it—no Republican votes or help to prevent an economic catastrophe. Now they have kicked their brinkmanship up another notch by blocking Democrats—Democrats only—from voting to avoid default with a purely Democratic vote.

This makes no sense if you truly care about our workers, about our families, about our hard-won economic recovery. It only makes sense if their goal is economic sabotage—if they are so willing to put politics first that you put the American economy on the line. That is, apparently, what the Republican Party stands for today until proven otherwise: economic sabotage and politics first, no matter who gets hurt.

This is a disgrace. It is an embarrassment. But it is not going to stop Democrats from fighting to protect our economy from the devastating consequences of default, because let me be clear: Republicans may think this is some obscure fight right now, but it will not be if it hits Americans’ bank accounts, and they are fooling themselves if they think people won’t know who is responsible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, suspending the debt ceiling is not about generating new spending. It is about making sure the government can pay for our spending. Since 1960, Congress has done this. It has raised the debt ceiling approximately 80 times. It is not unusual; it is not uncommon; it is not unacceptable. What is unacceptable is that our colleagues won’t even allow us to do it.

The 50 of us are united in this, and I say: Where are our Republican colleagues?

They know the fact: A default will impact everyone. The government will need to decide between sending out Social Security checks, ensuring we keep our promises to our vets, and paychecks to active military. It is disastrous for our economy and small business.

This year, Neil Bradley of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce said that failing to act responsibly and provide an increase in the debt limit would endanger our economy. It would cause global markets, of course, to lose confidence in the full faith and credit of the United States.

The stakes are high. This should not be about scoring political points. Our families, our workers, our seniors deserve better. Democrats are united to stand by their side.

And we say to our Republican colleagues: Where are you?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, Rube Goldberg was an American sculptor, cartoonist, and inventor best known for his cartoons that created very complicated machines to do very simple tasks.

Today, we have heard from MITCH MCCONNELL that he wants to emulate Rube Goldberg and put our entire national economy at risk by an extraordinarily complicated method to do a simple task, and the simple task was laid out so clearly in 2006. The minority leader said we are in exactly the same position now as we were then. Well, yes. The Republicans asked the Democrats to not filibuster so that they could raise the debt limit. The tables are turned. The simple same courtesy takes away the risk to our economy.

The risk is great for disaster relief, for Medicaid, for payments to our veterans, for payments to our currently serving forces; and there are broader risks, risks that Mark Zandi has laid out, in saying a recession could result in the loss of millions of jobs, that it could result in the loss of a half a billion dollars in family wealth, that it could be—or \$15 trillion in household wealth—\$15 trillion.

There are moments when the political games have to stop, when the partisan warfare has to stop. The Democrats did what the Republicans suggested in 2006. We also took an alternative method that MITCH MCCONNELL suggested in the past, which was to let, in 2011, the President raise the debt ceiling subject to an override by Congress. We have twice worked with the Republicans, at their request, for a simple method. This is not the moment for a Rube Goldberg disaster with the wealth and health of Americans at risk.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, following my remarks, Senator LANKFORD and Senator SCOTT of South Carolina be recognized to speak and to complete their remarks prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, the debate on President Biden's massive plan to expand social programs has focused primarily on its enormous cost. Remarkably, little attention has been paid to the content of those policy changes. Yet the expensive entitlement programs the administration is proposing would have profound implications for people's lives and for the values that are among the pillars of our society, for they would break the connection between work and a brighter future.

From antiquity to our time, great thinkers have observed that work is about more than just putting food on the table, important though that is; it has a profound value that enables people to build lives of self-reliance and meaning.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said:

No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity.

Under the President's plan, assistance checks sent from Washington would have no requirement that a recipient work, or pursue education or training, or participate in programs to remove barriers that prevent him or her from working. These unconditioned checks would sever the link between government assistance and work, education, or other requirements. No one would help a family identify obstacles to a better life. In essence, the Biden administration would reverse the pledge and reality of President Clinton's reforms when he promised to "end welfare as we know it."

Robert Doar, who oversaw assistance programs both for New York Governor George Pataki and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, described what has long been a bipartisan consensus. He said:

... the way to help people escape poverty is through a combination of work and government aid—not work alone and not government aid alone. But the two together.

Why is that combination so powerful and so successful?

Government assistance provides a hand up and aids families who are struggling to overcome barriers to a better life. Work not only provides the economic pathway out of poverty, but—also equally important—imparts dignity, self-reliance, and confidence. It allows people to provide for their own families. It instills a sense of belonging and pride. It strengthens our communities.

Let me give you two examples.

I first met Adais when she was enrolled in the Federal Job Corps program in Limestone, ME. As a teenager,

she had been homeless and wanted to get as far away as possible from the terrible circumstances in her life—thus her choice of the Job Corps in northern Maine. After completing this program in Limestone, Adais earned her degree in nursing from Husson University in Bangor. Today, due to her own perseverance, hard work, and government support during a very difficult time, she has a good life working as a nurse and providing for her three sons. She can take much pride in the life that she has built for herself and her family.

The second example involves women I met at the Aroostook County Community Action Program. They have benefited from a holistic approach to poverty, one that focuses on the needs of both the children and their parents—a two-generation-together approach—in order to end intergenerational poverty.

This two-generation approach identifies obstacles to work and financial independence, and then provides the necessary coaching and supports to help parents succeed in their goals while also meeting the needs of their children.

These mothers recounted to me with great pride their very moving stories of climbing the economic ladder out of poverty and into the workforce, providing a much better life for themselves and their children.

What these stories have in common is the dignity of work. As Stephen Hawking observed, "Work gives you meaning and purpose." Securing the skills and support to get good jobs changed the lives of these parents and the lives of their children.

Now, let me be clear that I have supported providing additional help to assist low-income working families. For example, I worked with Senator RUBIO to successfully double the child tax credit and expand its refundable portion as part of the 2017 tax reform act, but this credit was tied to work until the Biden administration changed the rules of the American Rescue Plan earlier this year.

Given the pandemic, that may well have been justified as a temporary measure. But now, the administration wants to jettison the work requirement permanently, and the House Democrats' bill removes all means testing for a new childcare entitlement program so even very wealthy families would qualify.

Shouldn't we look carefully at the consequences of sending checks from Washington untethered to any work or other requirements? Shouldn't assistance prioritize those with the greatest needs but in ways that position them to achieve self-reliance?

There are certainly times when it is appropriate for government to step in, and no one is arguing that people who cannot work, who may have disabilities, for example, should not receive government assistance—of course, they should. And in a time of crisis, certainly, we should do all we can to help

those who are in need, through no fault of their own, and that is what happened during the pandemic.

There were many temporary programs that were instituted to help as our economy shut down and people were laid off. I, along with three of my colleagues, authored one of them—the Paycheck Protection Program. The rationale was to allow employers to receive funding so that they could continue to pay their employees and keep intact that bond between employers and employees so that the workers could return to the workplace once the economy reopened. That program was successful and temporary.

But that is not what this administration is proposing. Rather, it is creating entitlement programs untethered to work that would fundamentally change incentives for our families, our communities, our society, and our economy, depriving people of their dignity and eroding their ability to provide for themselves and their families. Absent a pandemic or other crisis, Washington should not simply write monthly checks, creating dependency among those who could have a better life. The Federal Government's obligation is not fulfilled by simply sending a check, washing its hands of any responsibility to actually help people achieve self-sufficiency.

It appears that this administration is moving toward the left's proposal for a guaranteed minimum income, regardless of one's ability to work. Never forget that the first version of the Green New Deal included a guaranteed income for those "unable or unwilling to work." We must not go down that path.

We will not build a more prosperous, just, and equitable society, characterized by opportunity, dignity, and meaning, just by issuing government checks. The time-tested way to achieve those goals for American families is by supporting and rewarding work. It is by recognizing the dignity of work. And that is the tradition that we must continue to embrace.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is one of the most basic questions that we get in almost any setting: What do you do? It is common conversation, back and forth between adults or teenagers or college students alike: What do you do?

It is a philosophical issue, though, that really has to be addressed, and, interestingly enough, it has become a greater divide between Republicans and Democrats of late. It didn't used to be that way.

The simple conversation about "what do you do" and encouraging people to be able to be engaged in productive work and what they do seemed to be something that was unified.

Democrats and Republicans alike rallied in the 1990s, as Bill Clinton declared: We are ending welfare as we know it. A 60-year experiment of sending out checks to individuals, saying

we are going to help people escape poverty by sending a check to individuals, and if we give them a check, they will rise out of poverty.

Bill Clinton stood before the Nation and said: I campaigned to end that because that experiment didn't work, and he focused in a whole different direction, encouraging, as he spoke often on deadbeat dads, individuals that should pay their child support, need to pay it, and he highlighted how many people weren't doing that because those families were left exposed.

And he talked about the dignity of work, saying: To help people to be able to escape from poverty, we need to incentivize work and stop just sending a check to individuals but instead attach that to work.

The Nation stood and cheered and rallied around a moment to say: Let's help people, but let's help people actually rise.

There is a statement that I heard often, even during that time period: Let's not make welfare a hammock; let's make it a trampoline, that they can get assistance for a moment and be lifted out and to be able to rise to other things.

I thought that was a settled issue, until just last year. I suddenly started hearing President Biden on the campaign trail, and now in office, with my Democratic colleagues in the House already passing something over there in their committees, saying: We want to actually go back to welfare as we knew it. We want to be able to go back to that failed experiment, when we used to just mail checks to people, and so people in government would feel good to say: We took care of childhood poverty.

I have already heard people—even today in this body—say: If we pass this \$3½ trillion proposal, we will cut childhood poverty in half. That was a statement that was made pre-1990s, when government believed if I just mailed a check, suddenly children would rise out of poverty because the numbers are right. But, actually, what we discovered was inflation would rise as checks were mailed out, and families were trapped in permanent levels of poverty because there was a disincentive to actually engage in work.

Now, again, this used to not be a Republican-Democrat thing. This was just a thing that we could look at the data.

Brookings Institute, which is a left-leaning think tank—I think we could all commonly agree with that. The Brookings Institute has, year after year, gone back to be able to look at how people actually escape poverty. How does it happen? What are the features that are there if people—if it is true in their life that they escaped poverty. They have identified three areas; that if these three areas are true, you will escape poverty.

No. 1, graduate high school. People that graduate high school, much lower level. No. 2, have a full-time job; have an income; if you actually are working

full time. And, No. 3, if you wait until 21 to be married and then have children after marriage.

If those three things are true, the Brookings Institute said only 2 percent of the people actually are in poverty. Seventy-five percent of those folks in poverty that graduate high school, get a full-time job, have children after marriage—if those three things are true, 75 percent of them rise into the middle class.

This is not rocket science in some ways; it is just human nature. But the bill that is being set in front of us that is \$3½ trillion in entitlements—and just to be able to put in perspective how large that is, if you combined the budgets of all 50 States, the total budget of all 50 States, it is \$2 trillion. This new entitlement bill is \$3½ trillion that is being proposed—\$3½ trillion of new entitlements that would go to individuals that removes things like an incentive to work. It says you can get childcare tax credits, even if you are not working; that no matter if you are working or not—and the current limit, by the way, don't forget, is only \$2,500 of income in a year. If you will do at least \$2,500 worth of income in a year, then you get additional assistance. It is the encouragement to say the State will come alongside of you, but we have got to help you to be able to rise out of this spot—even that is taken away.

There is a marriage penalty that is included in this. Ironically, when I read from the Brookings Institute, and they say, "Do you want to help people rise out of poverty," there is actually a marriage penalty in this where it actually punishes.

So we seem to be punishing work and punishing marriage rather than encouraging people to be able to rise.

Listen, this statement should be common for us: What do you do? It is not just meaningful for individuals and for communities, it is meaningful for children because, in school, children will be asked: What do your parents do? And if it is nothing, it matters to a child. A child has the example that is set in front of them, and it becomes a generational issue. We should encourage each generation to be able to rise and be a part of our society, not to be disconnected but to be engaged with all of our society. That develops community between individuals. It helps our economy to grow. It is what made us the most powerful economy in the entire world because we had what we called the American work ethic.

The American work ethic was a very simple principle that everyone should have the opportunity to be able to do whatever job they choose to be able to do, to be able to have access to the economy.

And if we find any individual or any group that is blocked out of the economy, government steps in and clears the path to make sure there is a level path to be able to be engaged so that everyone has that option to be able to engage in the economy; that everyone has the chance to be able to rise.

That does not get better by telling people: Oh, sit down. You don't have to work. Oh, sit down right over there. We will take care of all your kids all the way through. You don't have to engage.

It sounds nice unless you are living in it. And then it traps people in generational poverty—urban, rural, across the country. It traps people in generational poverty. That doesn't help families. That doesn't help children. That doesn't bless families and help them to be able to rise out of poverty. It keeps them trapped in it.

We have a philosophical difference. How do we help people in poverty? I believe we help people in poverty by clearing out of every opportunity and making straight level paths, setting that in front of individuals and saying: You are an American. Go after the American dream. Apply the American work ethic: try, graduate high school, get a job, get married, stay engaged, bless your children. I believe that is the best way to be able to help our Nation.

Apparently, others believe that it is better just to be able to say: No. You can't do it. Sit down. I will send you a check.

I don't think that casts a vision for their children, and I don't think that helps our Nation.

If you want to make it very straightforward and simple, the census said that we have 21 million children who have a parent that lived outside the household in 2018. Thirty percent of those children were in poverty—three times the rate of children in households where both parents were present.

I could read the Brookings. I can read the census data. But I think we all know it in our gut; that we provide purpose and meaning to people when they can answer the question: What do you do, and it matters to our country and to them as a family.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I thank my colleagues, both Senator COLLINS and Senator LANKFORD, for their thoughts and their comments and their words today because what we are talking about today is not about simply a \$3½ trillion spending bill.

We are talking about something more fundamental to what it means to be an American. I am proud to be an American. I am proud to live in a country where upward mobility is a reality; that we can, by hard work and a strong education, change our fortunes in this country and not only change it for ourselves but change it for the generations that follow us.

As Senator LANKFORD talked about the three important ingredients of escaping poverty, I will say that, as a kid who stumbled in high school, who did not do well as a freshman, who did not see the opportunities that America had

available, who did not believe always that there was a way that a poor kid in South Carolina could ever escape poverty, I am thankful that I met a mentor and had a powerful mom who believed in me in a way that I could not believe in myself.

I am thankful to live in a country where the American free enterprise system provided a pathway forward, and if I could just see it and believe it and work towards it, it was possible for me to achieve the outcomes that we are sitting here trying to defend.

I am thankful that, as a kid who then finished high school, went on to college, and experienced the American dream, that we are here together to defend the American dream for the next generation. The challenge, of course, is that when we look at the \$3.5 trillion package, it makes it harder for a kid trapped in poverty, as I was, to find a path forward.

I will simply say that while we discuss this \$3.5 trillion package, the content of this package is more concerning than the cost of the package. I am certain that someone on the other side will figure out that taking 10 years of funding and making it 5 years of funding cuts it from \$3.5 trillion down to \$1.75 trillion. I am confident that that math is easy to do on either side. But I am not confident that we can preserve the American dream in all of its glory if the content of this package becomes law.

I think about how unfortunate it would be, in a nation that is narrowly divided, 50-50, that we would find ourselves, because the Democrats control the White House—there is a 50-50 split in the Senate that requires the Vice President to break a tie and a five-seat majority the Democrats have in the House. With those slim majorities, they want to do something so fundamentally transformative that it scares me for the future of the kids trapped in poverty all over America.

I don't know how we will continue to be able to preach the good news of economic opportunity and economic freedom when you are on the road to socialism. The two are antithetical. They don't go in the same direction. There is a fork in the road, and we as a nation have to choose one. Unfortunately, the Democrats, who have the slimmest of majorities, have the votes to fundamentally weaken the greatest economic engine in world history through taxing and spending policies that bring us so much closer to socialism.

The Democrats actually want you to believe what they say more than what you see with your own eyes. You see, the breadcrumbs of this \$3.5 trillion package can be seen by the level of inflation. If you put too much money into the economy too quickly and the supply remains about the same, it leads to inflation.

What inflation means to kids living in single-parent households and to people living and working paycheck-to-paycheck, what inflation means is, it

means a tax. It means that even with a small, marginal increase in your income, with the rate of inflation being over 5.5 percent, your spending power goes down.

So when you pull up to the gas station, as I did and as so many Americans do every single day to go to work, and you look at the price per gallon, it is over \$3 a gallon, which represents over a 40-percent increase in the cost of gas. On a fixed income, as our Social Security recipients and our golden Americans are, on people working paycheck to paycheck, a 40-plus percent increase in the cost of gas deprives them of some of the luxuries, the margins in their paychecks, and then stack on top of that a 20-percent increase in the cost of your utilities.

It is impossible—impossible—to recognize the devastating impact that the Biden inflation is having already on middle-income Americans, on paycheck-to-paycheck Americans, people living in poverty, and single-parent households.

But worse than the inflationary effect, which, of course, is a precursor to the \$3.5 trillion, is what the content does. Think about this: In America today, if you write a check for \$10,000, the IRS wants to know who you are writing it to. Under this proposal, imagine, if you will, the IRS spying on your bank account for every transaction over \$600. Imagine four tires—more than \$600. So the IRS wants to know why you are spending \$600 on tires. Imagine if your engine runs hot and you have to take your car in to get it checked—more than \$600. Imagine trying to find the money, scraping the resources together just to be able to buy school clothes for your kids, and if you have a couple kids, a couple pairs of shoes, pants—dresses are up 18 percent. Imagine that \$600 expense being taken out of your account, and the IRS is looking into your account to see what you are spending the money on.

The content of this legislation is more dangerous than the amount of the legislation. And I got to tell you, \$3.5 trillion is pretty dangerous, but more dangerous than the \$3.5 trillion is having the IRS empowered to take a look at every single transaction. Not only the \$600, but imagine doubling the number of IRS agents with the \$80 billion in this package—doubling the number of agents to come take a look at your family business, your family accounts. Destructive.

Go beyond that. Think about the average farmer in South Carolina who spent their entire life farming and who has more land than money. Because of this package and its impact on family businesses and family farmers, because of the way they want to refigure the death tax or the estate tax, as we say it when we are being polite in mixed company, here is what it means: It means that you jeopardize the ability to pass your family farm to the next generation.

This is not theoretical. You can talk to a farmer named Whit Player from

Lee County or Monty Rast in St. Matthews, SC, who have been farming for decades. Ask them about the impact of not being able to pass the family farm or small business to the next generation.

Think about punishing the farmers and still providing a check for \$12,500 for someone making \$800,000 a year to buy a luxury vehicle, an electric vehicle. You are going to give them a tax credit even though they make \$800,000.

Imagine a part of the bill where union workers at an auto factory are able to sell their cars with a \$4,500 tax credit, but the Volvo workers in South Carolina, the BMW workers in South Carolina who don't work at a union factory—their cars don't get the \$4,500 tax credit, embedding a unique form of bias into this bill. It just doesn't feel right. Restoring the tax credits for the State and local taxes for millionaires and billionaires across this country and putting that burden back on the backs of working people, middle-class working people.

I won't even go into raising the corporate tax from 21 percent to 28 percent or 26.5 percent. I won't go into eliminating passthroughs for small businesses, mom-and-pop businesses; a 20-percent increase because they eliminate the 20-percent credit on their small businesses. I won't get into that because we don't have enough time. I won't get into the raising taxes on individuals. I won't get into the capital gains tax going from 23.8 to 43.8. I won't get into all of that right now, but I will say this: If the Democrats' plan succeeds, I fear for that American dream that I am able to live right now. I fear that kids stuck in poverty today will be stuck in a caste system of socialism tomorrow.

Madam President, thank you for your time, your patience. I am just concerned about the greatest Nation ever designed in the history of the world. Thank you.

VOTE ON MEDINA NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Medina nomination?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

(Mr. BOOKER assumed the Chair.)

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The result was announced—yeas 61, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 387 Ex.]

YEAS—61

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Risch
Bennet	Hirono	Romney
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rosen
Blunt	Kelly	Rounds
Booker	King	Sanders
Brown	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Leahy	Schumer
Capito	Lujan	Shaheen
Cardin	Manchin	Smith
Carper	Markey	Stabenow
Casey	McConnell	Sullivan
Collins	Menendez	Tester
Cooms	Merkley	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Crapo	Murphy	Warner
Duckworth	Murray	Warnock
Durbin	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Graham	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Portman	
Heinrich	Reed	

NAYS—36

Barrasso	Fischer	Marshall
Blackburn	Grassley	Paul
Boozman	Hagerty	Rubio
Braun	Hawley	Sasse
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Inhofe	Shelby
Cotton	Johnson	Thune
Cramer	Kennedy	Toomey
Cruz	Lankford	Tuberville
Daines	Lee	Wicker
Ernst	Lummis	Young

NOT VOTING—3

Feinstein	Moran	Sinema
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (African Affairs).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

NORD STREAM 2

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, over the last several weeks, I have talked at length about the damage that President Biden and his administration are doing to the national security of the United States and to the security of our allies in Europe by giving Vladimir Putin a multibillion-dollar gift in the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline.

Today, I am going to talk about the staggering diplomatic damage that the President is doing by allowing and, indeed, facilitating this project proceeding. It is well known that Nord Stream 2 is opposed across Europe as an enabler of and, indeed, an example of and a weapon of Russian expansionism and aggression.

Europeans have good reasons for their opposition. They know firsthand what the costs are. They know that completing Nord Stream 2 will leave the entire continent vulnerable to Putin's blackmail and aggression, and

that NATO's ability to act will be severely constrained while billions will flow into the Kremlin's coffers.

What is sometimes underappreciated, however, even by the people who are familiar with this issue, is the all-but-complete unanimity of the opposition in Europe.

In 2018, the European Parliament voted by a vote of 403 to 105 to oppose the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. The pipeline proceeded, nonetheless, until it was halted by the bipartisan sanctions passed by this Congress in December of 2019—sanctions that I authored along with Democrat JEANNE SHAHEEN. The pipeline was halted the very day those sanctions were signed into law.

Then, in January of 2021, after Vladimir Putin tried to murder Alexei Navalny, the European Parliament voted again to oppose Nord Stream 2, this time by a vote of 581 to 50.

So I want you to pause for a second and reflect on the fact that Joe Biden looked at that vote and said the President of the United States is with the 50—never mind the 581—in the European Parliament. The Biden administration was going to side with Russia on a 90-percent issue, where the Biden White House is on the losing side.

Throughout all this process, there were plenty of voices in Germany who were opposed, especially after this vicious attempt on Navalny's life. The Parliamentary leader of the Greens, Katrin Goering-Eckardt, said:

The blatant assassination attempt by the mafia-like structures of the Kremlin can no longer leave us merely concerned, it must have real consequences.

Stating, "We need a clear answer" that will "make clear, Nord Stream 2 is no longer something we can compete with Russia."

Mr. President, my request to Senate Democrats, my request to President Biden, my request to KAMALA HARRIS is listen to the Greens. That is not a sentence I have uttered on the floor of the Senate before, nor is it one I anticipate saying frequently in the future. But the Greens in Germany are telling you this is a bad idea; yet today's Democratic Party that exalts climate change as the greatest issue in the cosmos, when it comes to kissing up and surrendering to Putin, decided to tell the Greens to go jump in the lake.

Former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen issued a statement that:

Germany is asking for European and NATO solidarity in response to the despicable Navalny poisoning. They will get it, but an honest answer from Putin is unlikely. Time has come for Germany to halt Nord Stream 2 construction, before it's too late.

If Senate Democrats mean what they have said for years on Nord Stream 2, then listen to the former Secretary General of NATO; listen to the Greens in Germany.

But now, bizarrely, after Joe Biden has ignored the Greens, after Joe Biden has ignored NATO, after Joe Biden has ignored our Central European allies, all

of this was done in the hopes of getting goodwill and support from Angela Merkel.

The Biden White House—the political geniuses that presided over the surrender and failure in Afghanistan, the greatest foreign policy catastrophe in a generation—their plan was, let's piss the whole rest of the world off so that we can make friends with Angela Merkel. By making friends with Angela Merkel, let's let Putin complete his pipeline.

Perversely, President Biden and Merkel issued their statement as a declaration for support of our Eastern European allies.

Boy, with support like that, who needs enemies?

I would like to read a joint statement from our Polish and Ukrainian allies in response to the laughable statement that Biden and Merkel put out. Here is what our Polish and Ukrainian allies said:

The decision to build Nord Stream 2 made in 2015 mere months after Russia's invasion and illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory, created security, credibility, and political crisis in Europe.

This crisis is significantly deepened by the resignation from attempts to stop the launch of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.

By the way, as an aside, that resignation would be Joe Biden's abandoning of U.S. law sanctioning Russia.

The letter continued:

This decision has created political, military, and energy threat for Ukraine and Central Europe, while increasing Russia's potential to destabilize the security situation in Europe, perpetuating divisions among NATO and European Union member states.

Let me read that again:

This decision—

Joe Biden's political genius, surrendering to Russia—

has created political, military, and energy threat for Ukraine and Central Europe—

That sounds bad. It is bad—

while increasing Russia's potential to destabilize the security situation in Europe, perpetuating divisions among NATO and European Union member states.

The letter continued:

Ukraine and Poland will work together with their allies and partners to oppose Nord Stream 2 until solutions are developed to address the security crisis created by Nord Stream 2, to provide support to countries aspiring to membership in Western democratic institutions, and to reduce threats to peace and energy security.

Mr. President, what do our friends in Ukraine and Poland tell us?

That Joe Biden's decision has created a "threat to peace and energy security."

But even then, Biden-Harris officials insisted that they had worked out security arrangements; it was all perfectly taken care of. They would ensure that Russia would never, ever, ever use Nord Stream 2 for blackmail.

Mr. President, that is their promise. That is Joe Biden's promise. Fear not, they have it figured out and they have

commitments that Russia will never use Nord Stream 2 for energy blackmail.

How long do you think those commitments lasted?

If you have a stopwatch, I am not sure the stopwatch could measure increments of time that small because Russia didn't even give a decent interval, didn't let the ink dry on the Biden White House press release before they immediately began doing the thing that Biden promised Russia would never do. Biden White House said: We have an agreement to make sure Russia never uses it for energy blackmail.

What did Putin say? Excuse me, we are in the middle of energy blackmail.

So we don't even have to wait a year, 2 years, 5 years. We don't have to wait a month. We don't have to wait a week. We don't have to wait a day to know if the Biden promise was true or false that Russia would never engage in energy blackmail over Nord Stream 2. Why? Because they are doing it right now, this instant, as we stand here.

Just one week ago, the Kremlin and its gas barons, the oligarchs—the corrupt mafia oligarchs that run Russia—said that if Europe wants reliable gas as we approach winter—and, gosh, did we mention it gets cold in Europe, that having gas to heat your homes and prevent your grandmother from freezing to death might be a nice thing?

Well, the Kremlin and the gas oligarchs said it is very simple: If they want to have heat, all they need to do is rush through the activation of Nord Stream 2.

They said: "Undoubtedly, the earliest possible commissioning of Nord Stream 2 will help balance the natural gas crisis in Europe."

Undoubtedly.

Russia is literally reducing the supply right now, today, exercising its blackmail in September.

The Presiding Officer lives in the Northeast United States. September is a beautiful time of year. The autumn leaves are turning. The breeze is crisp. You are not right yet shivering to turn on the heat at night. The same is true in Europe. But fast forward to November, fast forward to December, to January, to February, when the bitter cold starts setting in, when having gas or not, and having heat or not, is the difference between living and dying.

What are the Russian oligarchs saying?

They say, very simply: "Undoubtedly, the earliest possible commissioning of Nord Stream 2 will help balance the natural gas crisis in Europe."

And, of course, the response from Biden and from Germany has been crickets. Remember, Biden and Merkel said, if they try that—those dastardly Russians—we will stand up boldly to them, we will hold them to account.

Where is Joe Biden? No, I mean that seriously. Where is Joe Biden?

Nowhere. Maybe in the White House basement. I don't know. But he is not doing anything to stand up to the Rus-

sian energy blackmail happening right now. By the way, neither is Merkel. Their promises just weeks ago have already been demonstrated to be completely hollow and empty. The protections of their bogus deal were, on their face, a bluff; were, on their face, empty.

But how often is it in politics that such an empty promise gets revealed as a lie minutes after it is made?

In this case, Putin was only too happy to oblige. That is why we call the pipeline the Biden-Putin pipeline.

But, of course, the punch line of all of this—so the Biden administration has managed to tick off Europe, to tick off the European Union. They managed to tick off Ukraine. They managed to tick off Poland. They managed to tick off the Eastern Europeans. They have also independently managed to tick off the French so much that they pulled their Ambassador home from the United States.

But they did all of this, they said, in the deep gravelly tones of the Foggy Bottom establishment. They did all of this to build lasting relationships with Angela Merkel. And that would pay dividends. Never mind a generation of billions for Putin and Russia; never mind a generation of energy captivity for Europe; never mind thousands of high-paying jobs in America—union jobs, good union jobs—destroyed by Biden; never mind that. The benefit of making Angela Merkel is worth it.

Mr. President, you know, there is an old saying that God has a sense of humor. That was illustrated this weekend because, this weekend, there was an election in Germany. The people went to vote.

And what happened?

The German voters went to vote, and Merkel's party didn't win the election. Now the Social Democrats will be looking to form a coalition with the Greens.

Which Greens?

Oh, the very same Greens that are passionately opposed to Nord Stream 2, that cried vociferously to kill the pipeline, and Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS said: Go jump in a lake.

The new coalition.

By the way, just about every electoral scenario that comes out of this election will empower the Greens in Germany, and the political geniuses in the White House have just alienated and antagonized the Greens.

Biden's supine giveaway. Isn't that a good word—supine? It describes the Biden foreign policy for every enemy of America: Be flat on your belly, and give our enemies what they want. Biden's supine giveaway to Putin was all for nothing. It literally produced nothing for the United States. It alienated our friends, and it emboldened our enemies.

If you are Xi in China and you see Joe Biden rolling over and surrendering to Vladimir Putin, giving him everything he wants—giving him a pipeline that will enrich him for generations to come—what do you think

Xi is thinking? I can tell you what Xi is thinking. Xi is thinking this is a President who is weak who will surrender to me too. We saw that demonstrated just in recent days, where the Biden administration surrendered on a senior executive from Huawei in allowing her to go back to China, giving Communist China exactly what it wanted. And, once again, what does Xi take and what do the Chinese Communist leaders take from that? That this President will roll over, will surrender.

And, you know, there is a striking irony. These catastrophic decisions and failures are particularly jaw-dropping given that President Biden ran on a platform of restoring diplomacy. Do you remember the refrain “the adults are back”? It was said with this moral superiority—that the Biden guys were going to come in, and no more of this American strength. Huh-uh. The adults know better.

Here is what Joe Biden said on February 4:

I want the world to hear today: America is back. America is back. Diplomacy is back at the center of our foreign policy. . . . We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again, not to meet yesterday's challenges but today's and tomorrow's.

Biden spoke specifically about Russia. He said:

American leadership must meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism, including . . . the determination of Russia to damage and disrupt our democracy.

Biden added that “we must start with diplomacy rooted in America's most cherished democratic values: defending freedom [and] championing opportunity.”

You know, if irony had ever been alive, that speech killed irony. If irony were dead and buried, that speech made irony roll over in her grave. Literally every word of that speech, every syllable of every word down to “and” and “the,” has been proven false.

“America is back,” Biden told us. “Diplomacy is back.” “We will repair our alliances.” Mr. President, how has that gone? Have we, in fact, repaired our alliances? With Nord Stream 2, Biden has pissed off the French, the Polish, the Ukrainians, the European Union. Has Biden repaired our alliances?

Has Biden engaged with the world once again? Well, if “engaged with the world” means to surrender to Putin and give him everything he wants, then I guess so.

To meet not yesterday's challenges but today's and tomorrow's—how is giving Putin a massive natural gas pipeline meeting tomorrow's challenges unless the challenges are how to fund Russia's military? If those are the challenges he is talking about, then congratulations, Joe Biden; you actually lived up to that.

He spoke about Russia. “American leadership must meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism.” How did Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS

meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism? By funding it. Every year, Putin will cash a check of a couple billion dollars, courtesy of Joseph Biden. What should we use this couple of billion dollars for? How about for advancing authoritarianism.

Biden said:

We must start with diplomacy rooted in America's most cherished democratic values: defending freedom.

Mr. President, let me ask you something. Whose freedom did Joe Biden defend with this pipeline? He certainly didn't defend the freedom of the Ukrainians. He didn't defend the freedom of the Poles. He didn't defend the freedom of Europe. He didn't defend the freedom of France. He didn't defend even the freedom of Germany. Merkel wants this, but the voters in Germany have made clear that they don't want it. He didn't defend the freedom of the men and women of Georgia, of the Baltics—of all the former Soviet Republics whose safety and security is now jeopardized because Biden has decided to be a principal funder of the Russian military. That is not defending freedom.

He certainly didn't defend America's freedom. On his first day in office, Joe Biden shut down the Keystone Pipeline. He killed 11,000 jobs, including 8,000 union jobs. John Kerry helpfully told those union members: Learn to code. You silly, dirty worker who wants to work on a pipeline, no, no, no. Sit down at a MacBook instead.

How is it that the same President who kills American jobs on an American pipeline creates Russian jobs on a Russian pipeline? I don't know what you call that, but you don't call it defending freedom. You don't call it championing opportunity.

You know, I have to say, some years ago, I traveled to Europe. I was in Ukraine. I was in Poland. I was in Estonia. When I was there, I met with the leaders there, and I asked them about Russian aggression. This was years ago. I asked them about standing up to Russian aggression. To a person, when I asked them that, the blood drained out of their face, because, for the Poles, for the Ukrainians, for the Estonians, Russian tanks in the streets is not a hypothetical. That is not a scenario they are wondering what that would be like. Those of us old enough to remember it, as they sat at the table with me, they remembered. They remembered those Russian tanks.

Vladimir Putin has said, in perhaps the most candid moment of his life, that he considers the greatest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century to be the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The natural corollary of that is that his foreign policy objective is to recreate the Soviet Union and to subjugate the former Soviet Republics.

One of the most dangerous consequences of this pipeline, of the Biden-Putin pipeline, is that if this pipeline is allowed to go online, I fear we will see Russian tanks again on the ground in Ukraine.

Mr. President, you and I both serve on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. If and when that happens—in 6 months, in a year, in 2 years—I am going to ask you to remember these remarks, if and when we see Russian tanks on the streets in Ukraine, because Putin is no longer afraid that Ukraine is needed to transit energy. Putin now has his own pipeline—the Biden-Putin pipeline—to circumvent Ukraine.

If we see that subjugation of our ally, if we see that subjugation of liberty, Mr. President, I hope you and I hope every Member of this body and I hope the American people remember right now that Joe Biden, in February, said: “We must start with diplomacy rooted in America's most cherished democratic values: defending freedom [and] championing opportunity.” He has an opportunity to do so.

By the way, let me point out something. The Biden administration has a fantastic opportunity for a reset. Let's assume somebody in the administration realizes they screwed up on this pipeline. When they are losing votes in the European Parliament by a vote of 500 to 50, that ought to be a signal, particularly for people who pride themselves on their foreign policy prowess, on the adults being back. Losing a 10-to-1 vote in the European Parliament is not indicative of diplomacy being back.

By the way, when they lose the vote in this body—in both the House and Senate—when we have addressed Nord Stream 2, every time we have done it, it has been virtually unanimous. The margins of the U.S. Congress have been bigger than 500 to 50.

So let's say somebody in the Biden White House is having second thoughts. I don't know if they are. Maybe they are so committed to their policy that facts be damned; no second thoughts on that. But let's say someone is. Then Joe Biden has been given a gift. He has been given a gift of the recent German election.

There has been only one argument that the Biden White House has put forward for surrendering to Putin on this pipeline, and that is to make the German Government happy. It is a bad argument. It is an argument the Presiding Officer has rejected, that I have rejected. Virtually every Senator in this body, Democrat and Republican, has rejected it as a bad argument that hurts America, that hurts Europe, that helps Putin.

But, for sake of argument, let's give the Biden White House the benefit of the doubt. Let's assume they really believe that. Well, this weekend gave him a gift. If the lone benefit they achieved was this will make the German Government happy, what do we know now? This makes the German Government unhappy.

As we stand here today, the ledger of cost and benefits is very simple: There is one winner on the Biden-Putin pipeline, and that is Vladimir Putin; that

is Russia; that is the Russian Army. Everybody else is a loser. So I would say to the Biden White House they have an easy gift: Reverse course.

By the way, the Biden State Department, Secretary Blinken, fought to impose these sanctions, and political operatives in the Biden White House overruled the Secretary of State.

Secretary Blinken, you have a fabulous opportunity.

The Secretary of State is unhappy that I have holds on nominees to the Department of State. The Presiding Officer is unhappy as he sends repeated tweets, expressing his dismay that I am using the leverage of a Senator to try to stop this pipeline.

Well, I have good news: The German electorate has given you an answer to this problem.

The Biden White House has an easy excuse. The German Government is changing. So their only benefit—to make the German Government happy—has disappeared. If all they care about is making the German Government happy—if they don't care about the rest of Europe; if they don't care about Ukraine; if they don't care about the European Union; if they don't care about American jobs; if they don't care about Putin getting richer and stronger—if the only criterion is to make the German Government happy, do you know what they should do today? Sanction Nord Stream 2 AG. Follow the law. If they do that, I will lift the holds, and these nominations can proceed very, very quickly.

The German voters have given Joe Biden a gift. The only question is if anyone in the White House is paying attention, if anyone wants to accept the gift, or are they too stubborn? They have picked their course, dammit, and they are going to go down with the ship even if it hurts America forever.

There is still time to stop this pipeline. The question is, Does anyone in the White House care? I hope and pray that they do because if Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS persist in their decision to completely and totally surrender to Vladimir Putin, that will harm the United States not for a year, not for 10 years, but for 30, 40, 50 years going forward.

Mr. President, the German voters have given you a gift. You should take it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2850

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep concern with President Biden's disregard for American freedom. President Biden's strong-arm

push to force Americans to choose between their health and decisions affecting their health, on the one hand, and providing for their families, on the other hand, is wrong.

I simply do not believe the Federal Government has any business mandating the COVID-19 vaccination for all Americans.

Now, let me be clear. I believe that vaccines, broadly speaking, have provided immense benefits to society, nearly eradicating measles, polio, smallpox, and more in the United States.

I have personally received the COVID-19 vaccination, as has my entire family, and I view the rapid development of effective COVID-19 vaccines as a miracle; one that safeguards the vulnerable from severe illness and from hospitalization.

I believe that the FDA's expedited approval process is effective at efficiently reviewing and producing generally safe drugs and devices for Americans' use.

Additionally, I believe the emergency use authorization can make drugs available to Americans more quickly, which, in some cases, can mean the difference between life and death.

So even with the speed by which COVID-19 vaccines were developed and made available, I very much believe that they are generally safe. However, receiving the vaccine is a decision that Americans should make with all the facts in front of them, in consultation with their doctors, and with full consideration of their own current health circumstances.

However, President Biden made his intentions clear when announcing his Federal mandate saying: "This is not about freedom or personal choice."

Look, we have got to remember that anytime someone, someone who is serving as the President of the United States, while issuing a sweeping Federal mandate, insists that this is not about freedom or personal choice, it is. It necessarily is. It unavoidably is.

The fact that he made this statement is troubling. The statement highlights the fact that the President does not understand the key relationship between citizens and government under our Constitution.

Every mandate, regulation, tax, or any other government imposition comes necessarily at the cost of freedom and personal choice of Americans. It is a tradeoff we make with government. Use of overwhelming government power, without even considering the implications on freedom, is precisely why our Founders thought the Declaration of Independence, a revolution, and our Constitution were necessary.

I have heard from many Utahans who are at risk of being unemployed if they choose not to get the vaccine. In fact, within the last week alone, my office has heard from no fewer than 144 Utahns in distress for this very reason.

Allow me to share just a few of their stories:

A young woman in Utah has two autoimmune diseases. She was told by her doctor that she should not get vaccinated because of her existing health conditions. Yet her employer has informed her that, contrary to her doctor's recommendations, she must get the vaccine or be fired. Get the vaccine or be fired, those are the only two options she is left with.

A soon-to-be-mother, who has been advised not to get the vaccine because of her pregnancy, has been told by her employer that she must choose between receiving the vaccine and receiving a paycheck. Without her job, she will not have the means to care for her child.

A disabled veteran, who now spends his time working for the VA because he loves helping his fellow veterans, has been informed that he must be fully vaccinated within the next 75 days or lose his employment. This ultimatum imposed by President Biden is making him choose between receiving an unwanted medical procedure, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, being unable to provide for his pregnant wife and their child.

After businesses have weathered the economic impacts of COVID-19 and the corresponding shutdowns that have led to so many closures and bankruptcies, President Biden now wants to force employers to act as a sort of medical police force. They must impose a vaccine mandate on their workforce or be forced to pay a heavy fine.

This mandate is constitutionally dubious—and that is putting it mildly—and it is not reasonable and it neglects the interests of business owners, families, and individuals alike.

Look, threatening the employment of millions of Americans and making employers become enforcers is not how our country will return to normal. It is not even how you will make more people decide to get the vaccine. These steps will only erode meaningful relationships that Americans have with one another.

The utility of such a sweeping mandate is also in question. In fact, a recent study from three hospitals in Israel shows that natural immunity was "27 times more effective than vaccinated immunity in preventing symptomatic infections."

This mandate completely ignores existing evidence-based data lending credibility to the reality that millions of Americans may not need to be vaccinated because they have acquired natural immunity from previous COVID-19 illness. Further, the mandate dismisses the reality that there are outstanding questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine's safe administration to those who are immunocompromised or have certain other health-related concerns or how to accommodate any who may have objections rooted in religious or other sincerely held beliefs.

The decision to engage in a medical procedure, you see, is personal. It is

deeply personal, and even the idea that it can be forced upon citizens by the Federal Government is offensive. If particular American citizens do not feel that the receipt of the COVID-19 vaccine is the right decision for them or their children, then they are entitled to that belief.

A mandate by the Biden administration to be vaccinated against COVID-19 under threat of unemployment will not quell Americans' concerns; instead, it will likely further erode the little trust that may currently exist.

Now, I don't believe that the Federal Government has been as transparent as it must. In its effort to get as many people vaccinated as possible, it has neglected the responsibility to inform Americans of any adverse effects that some may have experienced. These unfortunate instances of harm following the administration of COVID-19 vaccines must be acknowledged even if they are rare.

The fact that instances of adverse reactions to the COVID-19 vaccines are not being shared with the public or even, in many cases, the medical community, causes me grave, grave concern. It has left those who have been adversely harmed with almost nowhere to turn. It has caused distrust in the unvaccinated that the government may have something to hide.

When openly and transparently informed, I believe that each and every American is able to handle the responsibility of weighing the risks of getting vaccinated or not getting vaccinated. I honestly believe that most Americans, after speaking to their doctors, will make the decision that is best for themselves, for their families, and for our country.

Finally, while I have not seen the final regulation for President Biden's COVID-19 vaccine mandate, nor do I know definitively even what statute he is claiming provides him with this sweeping authority, I highly doubt that this unilateral action is constitutional. But, frankly, I don't think the President cares. President Biden knows the effects his announcement and even a temporary regulation will have, even if it is later ruled unconstitutional. Even if the mandate is never fully or ever implemented, it still could get him what he wants.

Businesses across the Nation are yielding before the awesome might of the Federal Government in complying with this Executive mandate before it has even legally been drafted, let alone enforced.

According to the vague outline that President Biden's speech provided, a business would risk going under if even a small percentage of its workforce were unvaccinated at the time enforcement begins. This is a scare tactic—a scare tactic of the absolute worst sort—and it is working. People are scared, and I am here to defend them.

Today, in this bill, the Senate has the opportunity to protect those in the minority, those Americans who sin-

cerely believe, due to religious conviction or otherwise, that they should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

This bill would not prevent businesses from imposing their own mandates or establishing rules for their own workplaces. All this bill would do is to ensure that the Federal vaccine mandate provides an exemption for Americans whose sincere beliefs prevent them from receiving the vaccine.

Furthermore, nothing in Federal law provides President Biden the authority to institute the vaccine mandate on private-sector employers or on the public at large, and today Congress has the opportunity to rectify this situation for the American people.

Now, I want to be clear. This is not the end of my discussion here. I have 12 of these bills. I will be back tomorrow and the next day, for as long as it takes to win the fight against this sweeping mandate.

So, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 2850 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). Is there objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this unnecessary bill will undermine our efforts to end a pandemic that has killed over 685,000 people and counting.

We are fighting a highly contagious virus. If people don't get vaccinated, variants like Delta will continue to spread, undermine our economy, and take lives. Getting people vaccinated is one of the most important things we can do to stop COVID-19.

And let's be clear. Immunization requirements are nothing new in this country. State and local governments and school districts have required vaccination against diseases like polio and measles for over a century. Taking similar steps against COVID is just commonsense.

Tailored exemptions for legitimate religious and medical considerations already exist in current law and are included in President Biden's policy.

This bill could undermine existing protections and create a massive loophole that would lead to more unnecessary and preventable deaths.

It is so frustrating to know how scared people are of this virus, to know how many people it has killed, to know how hard people are trying to do the right thing and how eager they are for this to end, only to have Republicans offer ideas that would create political division, prolong this crisis, and cost more lives, so I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I want to be very clear about something. There are no exemptions built into the mandate because the mandate doesn't yet exist.

As far as I can tell, this may be a feature and not a bug, you see, because he gave a speech—he gave a speech—talking about the fact that he was going to issue the mandate. He didn't release any legally operative documents, didn't even disclose his precise source of authority to do this—authority which I highly doubt even exists. So there is no document to challenge. No one can sue to challenge the document because the document doesn't exist.

But businesses everywhere fear and, indeed, know that it is coming, and so their general counsel's offices, their human resources departments for employers with more than 99 employees in this country are scrambling to get ahead of it. Many are even adopting and some, I am told, are moving forward with enforcing or preparing to enforce those same policies. So what will happen is that those employees who have these sincerely held objections will be without recourse.

Now, my friend and colleague from Washington makes the point that these exemptions are already there. That is a legal and factual impossibility because the mandate does not yet exist. The document isn't in there, which begs the question: If it already exists, then what would be her objection or anyone's objection to merely adopting a measure that says any such mandate, if and when it is issued, must contain such an exemption—an objection that my friend and colleague from Washington assures us already exists. It is difficult for me to understand how this would be objectionable.

Without these protections, you see, President Biden is telling many religious minorities in the country that they need not apply for a job, and if they have got a job already, that that job is in jeopardy.

Freedom to make one's own medical decisions is fundamental to our system of liberty. The economic impact of the mandate is going to hamper our economic recovery as workers are forced to make hard decisions.

Here we are talking specifically about objections rooted in religious or other sincerely held personal beliefs. If, in fact, that exemption already exists, that protection is already there, which it isn't because it can't be because the document itself doesn't exist, then why not embrace it? Why not accept it? Why not acknowledge it in law?

I struggle to imagine what harm could come from protecting religious minorities in this country, and I find it very discouraging and very distressing that this body, the U.S. Senate, wouldn't want to do everything we possibly could to make that happen.

Another word about the fact that it doesn't yet exist; the mandate isn't there. Because it is not there, employers with more than 99 employees around the country are being forced to

guess as to what it might mean, and a whole lot of them are already preparing their own policies—in some cases, already adopting them and enforcing them based on their own anticipation of what the mandate may be. What it means as a practical matter is, you can't sue anyone. You can't sue any administrator in the Biden administration or elsewhere in the Federal Government who is going to be enforcing this because you don't know what they are going to be enforcing. There isn't a dispute ripe for adjudication in any court anywhere because we don't know what that is.

For many people, this entire exercise could be rendered moot in the meantime, not just moot in the sense that the court would lack article III jurisdiction to entertain the dispute in question, but moot in the sense that they might lose their job, moot in the sense that they are going to have to face this awful Hobson's choice between maintaining their ability to provide for their family, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, receiving a medical procedure that they would deem harmful and objectionable based on their religious or other sincerely held beliefs. This is not America; this is not acceptable; and this is not and cannot possibly be constitutional.

We should be able to do this.

I am going to be back tomorrow, the next day, and as long as it takes to keep addressing this issue. Freedom matters, and the Constitution matters. President Biden has ignored them both. Thank you.

VOTE ON PHEE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Phee nomination?

Mr. MURPHY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The result was announced—yeas 67, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 388 Ex.]

YEAS—67

Baldwin	Duckworth	Markey
Bennet	Durbin	McConnell
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Menendez
Blunt	Graham	Merkley
Booker	Grassley	Murkowski
Brown	Hassan	Murphy
Burr	Heinrich	Murray
Cantwell	Hickenlooper	Ossoff
Capito	Hirono	Padilla
Cardin	Inhofe	Peters
Carper	Kaine	Portman
Casey	Kelly	Reed
Collins	King	Risch
Coons	Klobuchar	Romney
Cornyn	Leahy	Rosen
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Rounds
Crapo	Manchin	Sanders

Schatz	Sullivan	Warren
Schumer	Tester	Whitehouse
Shaheen	Tillis	Wyden
Sinema	Van Hollen	Young
Smith	Warner	
Stabenow	Warnock	

NAYS—31

Barrasso	Hagerty	Rubio
Blackburn	Hawley	Sasse
Boozman	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Thune
Cramer	Lankford	Toomey
Cruz	Lee	Tuberville
Daines	Lummis	Wicker
Ernst	Marshall	
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Feinstein	Moran
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Todd D. Robinson, of New Jersey, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, we heard over the course of many hours last week and, indeed, over the many months that Foreign Affairs nominees have been languishing on the Senate floor, the concerns of the junior Senator from Texas related to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. We also have heard at length from Members of this body about the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan—from the junior Senator from Missouri.

As I have said publicly and repeatedly, I share my colleague's concerns about the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. He put up a series of my quotes. They are all true. I am still of that view, but I am not of the view that you stop the national security apparatus in order to pursue a policy difference and create a whole host of other serious risks for the United States.

I believe and have said that the evacuation from Afghanistan was fatally flawed. In fact, the Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing and heard from Secretary Blinken about the situation in Afghanistan. The Foreign Relations Committee is holding a briefing tomorrow about the administration's efforts to bolster European energy security to counter Russia's efforts in this area. And I intend to continue oversight of the situation in Afghanistan and why, over the course of 20 years, we have failed.

What I fail to understand is the relationship between the foreign affairs

nominees pending before this body and those topics. These individuals are critical to confronting numerous other global challenges, promoting American values, and advancing the safety, health, and economic well-being of America. We need them confirmed today—today.

I therefore will rise to seek unanimous consent for the confirmation of 10 nominees, including seven career diplomats. Each of them moved through the Foreign Relations Committee with bipartisan support. There is no reason for Republicans to block their confirmation.

Let me speak to them for a minute or two.

This is especially the case at the U.S. Agency for International Development. The Administrator of USAID, Samantha Power, is the only member of that Agency's senior leadership that has been confirmed by this body. Ambassador Power needs her senior leadership team in place. Yet her two deputies are languishing on the floor because of Republican holds.

This Agency is grappling with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other humanitarian emergencies that are ravaging the globe. It simply cannot function at its best without senior leadership. So why is it that Republicans insist on blocking Paloma Adams-Allen and Isobel Coleman, two highly qualified nominees to serve as USAID Deputy Administrators?

Let me take a moment to once again raise Haiti. We hear a lot about Haiti here on the floor, particularly from our Republican colleagues, and the challenge at the border.

Well, in August, a massive earthquake in Haiti killed more than 2,200 people, injured 12,000 more, and destroyed tens of thousands of buildings. This comes after the assassination of Haiti's President. But here, again, Republicans are holding a senior member of Ambassador Powers' team, Marcela Escobari, the nominee to be the Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean at USAID. Escobari, who will manage our response to the Haiti earthquake, once confirmed, already held this very job in the Obama administration. Guess what. She was confirmed by voice vote then.

Now we want to deal with the challenge of Haitian refugees coming to the border and other refugees of the hemisphere coming to the border. Let's confirm the USAID Deputy Administrator who will deal with that issue so we can deal with the root causes. How do we create stability in Haiti? How do we provide relief for the Haitian people? How do we create feeding for the Haitian people so they are not fleeing their country? But, no, we are going to stop this nominee who is going to be at the very heart of that. So when you see a new group of Haitian refugees, blame yourself.

We spent many months in this body talking about the challenges posed by the Government of the People's Republic of China. The U.S. Innovation and

Competition Act, passed by this body in June, and the Strategic Competition Act, which passed almost unanimously out of the Foreign Relations Committee, 21 to 1, are proof of that. We have collectively come together on this much: to recognize China as the greatest geopolitical and geoeconomic challenge for U.S. foreign policy. We have rightfully focused on effectively confronting Chinese malign influence. Yet we are failing to ensure a fundamentally critical element of that strategy; that is, empowered leadership in our diplomatic corps across the world.

Our former colleague Senator Ken Salazar is the only—hear me—the only Biden administration nominee who has been confirmed to serve as a country Ambassador representing U.S. interests abroad, the only one in the 9 months of this administration.

Let me be clear. Holding up diplomats is effectively ceding influence to China and actively undermining U.S. national security interests. People come to the floor and talk about China. Well, they are empowering China by not having our people in position to counter their influence.

It is a fact that Congo and Angola owe over 40 percent of their entire national debt—to whom? To China. So I ask my colleagues, why have we not yet confirmed Tulinabo Mushingi, a career Foreign Service officer, as our Ambassador to Angola? Why have we not yet confirmed Eugene Young, another career Foreign Service officer, as our Ambassador to the Congo?

China and Somalia have recently entered into a new fishing agreement, and Chinese vessels are increasingly accessing Somalia's waters and strategic coastline adjacent to the Red Sea. Why have we not confirmed Larry Andre, Jr., a career Foreign Service officer, as our Ambassador to Somalia?

China's influence is spread across the continent of Africa, including its Belt and Road Initiative, which is branded as a development initiative but being used by China to advance its own interests. Why have we not yet confirmed Elizabeth Aubin and Maria Brewer, two career Foreign Service officers, as our Ambassadors to Algeria and Lesotho, respectively?

I spoke on the Senate floor several months ago about Chinese influence in Cameroon. We have not had an American Ambassador in Cameroon in over a year. Why have we not yet confirmed Christopher John Lamora, a career Foreign Service officer, as our Ambassador to Cameroon?

Vietnam sits on the border of China. It is on the frontlines of Chinese coercion in the South China Sea. Why have we not yet confirmed Mark Knapper, a career Foreign Service officer, as our Ambassador to Vietnam?

Colleagues, each of these nominees I mentioned deserves to be confirmed today, and our national security interests demand it.

In pursuit of what I hope will be a recognition of that—because at some

point, something is going to happen here in the world, in one of these countries or one of these regions. When it happens and we don't have our representative there, I think a Member who is objecting is going to have to live with that reality.

Let me ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consider the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 336, Paloma Adams-Allen to be a Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development; that the nomination be confirmed; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order in terms of the nomination; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. Reserving the right to object, I appreciate the earnestness on this issue from my friend and colleague the Senator from New Jersey. He mentions that something could happen in the world, that something will happen in the world. Something, I submit to you, has happened in the world, and today we have been learning about it. I am talking about the crisis in Afghanistan, the debacle in Afghanistan.

All day, the Senate has been hearing testimony in the Armed Services Committee from Secretary Austin, from General Milley, and from General McKenzie about how it came to be that 13 American servicemembers are dead, 169 civilians killed, and hundreds of Americans left behind enemy lines there as we still speak—the greatest foreign policy crisis that this country has seen since Vietnam. And those aren't my words; those are the words—the comparison of the Democratic members of the committee who repeatedly referenced today Vietnam, the fall of Saigon. That is the level of crisis that we are dealing with.

What accountability has there been for this crisis, for this debacle? Because “crisis” isn't even quite the right word. That sounds like a natural disaster, as if it accidentally happened. That is not the case. This is a debacle, a failure of leadership in the first order, and what accountability has there been for it? Who has resigned? Who has been fired? Who has been relieved of command? Nobody. What actions have the administration taken? None.

What does Secretary Austin say today? He says: Well, we will take a hard look at ourselves, and we will ask some tough questions.

Mr. President, that is not nearly good enough. Americans are dead. Americans are stranded behind enemy lines. Our foreign policies are in a state of collapse. Our national security is in a state of collapse. Enemies around the world are watching what is happening in Afghanistan, are seeing an oppor-

tunity as the United States shows weakness and disarray and chaos. There must be accountability.

Let me say something more about what we learned today because we did learn quite a lot, and all of it is frightening. We learned that the President of the United States lied. He lied when he said to the American people in an interview on television just a few weeks ago that he was never told by any of his military advisers—never told that a drawdown on this timetable, his timetable, would result in catastrophe.

He was asked by George Stephanopoulos:

Your top military advisers warned against withdrawing on this [timetable]. They wanted you to keep about 2,500 troops.

President Biden:

No, they didn't.

Stephanopoulos:

They didn't tell you that they wanted troops to stay?

President Biden:

No.

Stephanopoulos:

So no one told—your military advisers did not tell you, “No, we should just keep 2,500 troops.”

President Biden:

No. No one said that to me that I can recall.

Today, we heard from General Milley, General McKenzie, and Secretary Austin, who—each of them said that they advised the President—it was their considered military judgment that the President's plans were mistaken. They advised against it. They advised him against it. Yet he said: No, no one ever told me. I am not responsible. No one ever told me.

We also learned this: We learned that the President lied when he said that he had no idea that the Taliban would take over the country in such a short time period.

From the same interview, George Stephanopoulos said to President Biden:

Back in July, you said a Taliban takeover was highly unlikely. Was the intelligence wrong, or did you downplay it?

Biden said: No. I think that there was no consensus. If you go back and look, they said it is not going to happen.

Stephanopoulos:

[But] you didn't put a timeline on it when you said it was highly unlikely. You just flat out [said], “It's highly unlikely the Taliban would take over.”

President Biden said:

Yeah.

We learned today, in fact, that his commander on the ground, General Miller, warned as early as March, March of this year, that the military situation in Afghanistan was deteriorating rapidly; that the Taliban was on the offensive; that the drawdown of American troops would likely result in the collapse of the Afghan Government and the Afghan security forces sooner rather than later. It was going to come fast is what General Miller said. Yet

the President says no one ever told him that. He never knew about it. In fact, his own commanders on the ground warned him about it.

What was the consequence of this? Well, the President is either forgetting or ignoring or just outright lying about what he was advised by his own commanders.

His administration was failing to plan for the collapse of the Afghan security forces. We learned that today too. Secretary Austin said: We just didn't plan for a scenario of an Afghan security forces collapse. We didn't plan for it.

Why didn't they plan for it? Why isn't somebody being held accountable for it?

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan has been warning for years that the Afghan security forces were not ready, that they were not well equipped, that they were not well trained, and that they would not likely stand on their own. We know that the commander on the ground shared the same assessment. Yet the administration did not plan for—by their own admission did not plan for the collapse of the Afghan security forces or the collapse of the Afghan Government, which also meant that they did not order the evacuation of American civilians in time. They dilly-dallied. They waited. They dithered. They did not order the evacuation in time. They waited until the middle of August to undertake an evacuation of civilians in earnest, after American troops had withdrawn from the country. No wonder there was chaos in Kabul. No wonder there was a total disaster. That is the administration's fault. They waited because they hadn't planned. They waited because apparently they were fighting among themselves—the State Department, Defense Department, the White House—all fighting because President Biden wasn't leading. It was a total debacle, total chaos.

My friend the Senator from New Jersey quite reasonably wants to know, what is the connection? Why I am objecting to these nominees? Why do I want a vote?

Here is the connection: It is about accountability. No one has been held accountable. I note the Senator wants to hear from Secretary Austin in his committee. He should hear from the Secretary in his committee because what we learned today contradicts quite a lot of the testimony that the Secretary of State gave to the Senator from New Jersey and his committee earlier—quite a lot of contradictions. He is quite right to want to hear from Secretary Austin.

We need to do more than hear from him; we need to have accountability for what has happened. Until we get that accountability, until someone is held responsible, until there is some turn, some change, some shift in policy—and I have called for the resignations of General Milley, Secretary Austin, Secretary Blinken, and the na-

tional security advisers, all of whom planned and executed this operation. Until there is accountability, I think the least the Senate can do is actually vote, take at least a vote on this floor for nominees to leadership position at the State Department and the Department of Defense.

Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I have remarks.

I ask that it be in order to make the same unanimous consent request to Calendar No. 337, Isobel Coleman to be Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 323, Marcela Escobari, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 237, Tulinabo S. Mushingi, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Angola, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 238, Eugene S. Young, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of the Congo.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 233, Larry Edward Andre, Jr.,

of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federal Republic of Somalia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 234, Elizabeth Moore Aubin, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 235, Maria E. Brewer, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Lesotho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 236, Christopher John Lamora, of Rhode Island, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cameroon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 317, Marc Evans Knapper, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, the Senator from Missouri wants accountability. That is fine. But from a slew of

career Foreign Service officers who had absolutely nothing—nothing—to do with whatever decisions were made in Afghanistan, that is where the accountability is going to come from?

These are people who have committed their lives to serving the United States of America. They have committed their lives either in Republican or Democratic administrations. It doesn't matter. They carry out the mission of the United States and its foreign policy as dictated by the President and Congress. They had nothing—nothing—Sao Tome and Principe? The Congo? Somalia? Algeria? Lesotho? Cameroon? Vietnam?—to do with the decisions in Afghanistan. Yet they are the ones we are going to extract a pound of flesh of accountability from—on people who had absolutely nothing to do with the decisions on Afghanistan and who have committed their lives to the career Foreign Service. These aren't political nominees. These are career Foreign Service officers.

I heard my colleague talk about—that our enemies around the world are emboldened. Well, guess what. They are really going to be emboldened when we have no Ambassador to counter them in these countries, because they have gotten clear sailing. They can do whatever they want. They can talk to those heads of state.

There is no American Ambassador to go in and talk to that head of state and say: Mr. President or Mr. Prime Minister—whatever the title may be—don't make that choice. It would be a bad choice. We offer you a different alternative. We offer you a different set of principles, a different set of values—ones that would inure to the benefit of your country.

But no, there is no one from the United States of America who is going to be able to go into those countries and say any of that, because we are going to extract—when I say “we,” I should retract that. The Senator from Missouri wants to extract accountability on people who have done absolutely nothing as it relates to making these decisions.

When we have problems in this hemisphere with migration, I want my colleagues to know, who are objecting, that they will bear a significant part of the responsibility, because if we can't deal with the root causes to stop people from coming to our southern border, whether they be from Haiti or Central America or any other place, then we are going to continuously have a flow of people as they avoid disaster, civil conflict, authoritarian governments. But, if we had people in place to develop the plans and the programs and implement them so we could stop the flow and so we could create stability in Haiti—guess what—we are less likely to have people come to the southern border. But, no, we are going to extract accountability on people who have absolutely nothing to do with Afghanistan.

Not only is this shortsighted, but for those who stand on the Senate floor

and talk about the national security of the United States, this hurts the national security of the United States. It hurts the national interests of the United States.

So I hope that there will be a reflection. Maybe there are better targets to pick than career Foreign Service officers in countries that have no decision, no policymaking on any of these issues that my colleague has a problem with. Maybe there are better ones to pursue.

In the absence of that, I will tell you there is going to be a rude awakening. Mark my words. I have been doing foreign policy for 30 years between the House and the Senate. It will happen sooner than you think, and you will remember this moment and wish you hadn't objected to some of these people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

RUSSIA

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I have spoken throughout these last several days about how the Nord Stream 2 pipeline—the Biden-Putin pipeline—runs counter to everything that the Biden administration professes to stand for, and, indeed, what much of the Democratic Party has been insisting for the last half decade are the most important issues of the country.

We, of course, spent 4 years, during the Trump Presidency, listening to Democrats say, “Russia, Russia, Russia,” over and over and over again. It was a newfound discovery. Some of us are old enough to remember Barack Obama turning to MITT ROMNEY in the 2012 Presidential election when MITT ROMNEY was advocating for strength in dealing with Russia and for taking on Putin, and some of us remember Obama looking at MITT ROMNEY and saying:

[Mitt], the 1980s called. They want their foreign policy back.

That was in 2012, when the Democrats thought it was passe to stand up to Russia.

Then 2016 happened, and Donald Trump was elected President. Suddenly, the Democratic Party got religion. Suddenly, Russia was bad. Now, I thought Russia was bad before. I thought Russia was bad when Trump was President. And I think Russia is bad now. I don't like dictatorial thugs like Vladimir Putin, who is a KGB thug.

But, interestingly, for our friends on the Democratic side of the aisle, their outrage against Russia is situational. It applies only in the situation that a Republican is in the White House. When a Democrat is in the White House—when Joe Biden is there—suddenly, Putin is hunky-dory. Suddenly, Democrats don't have much of a problem with Joe Biden defying Federal law, ignoring Federal law, and giving a multibillion-dollar gift to Putin.

Suddenly, the Democrats have given all of these speeches on Russia, who passed CAATSA. I talked earlier about

CAATSA, the legislation that imposes mandatory sanctions on Russia to stop a President who refuses to impose those sanctions. Well, Joe Biden is in defiance of CAATSA. Do you see a single Democrat standing up, saying: Mr. President, obey CAATSA? No. They are whining that the deputy assistant under secretary of whatchamacallit has not been confirmed yesterday, and, clearly, the world is going to come to an end without a deputy assistant of whatchamacallit.

If our Democratic colleagues believed their rhetoric of the last 4 years, we would see Democrats stand up with me and say, “Joe Biden's multibillion-dollar gift to Putin is a mistake,” but they are not.

One of the ironies, in addition to the “Russia, Russia, Russia” thing—and the truth of the matter—is most of the Democrats never believed Russia, Russia, Russia. If you go back to the Soviet Union, if you go back to the Reagan administration, the Democrats had spent decades as apologists for Soviet Communists, as apologists for Russian dictators. But for 4 years, I have got to say that our Democratic colleagues can give a good speech. They sure sounded genuine when they said, “Russia, Russia, Russia.” But if they believed those words, then they would look at Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS, and they would say, “Russia, Russia, Russia.”

By the way, they didn't like Donald Trump's rhetoric on Russia, and by the way, I didn't like a lot of the things President Trump said on Russia. I wish his rhetoric had been stronger, but it is worth noting that Trump had the courage to call out Germany for Nord Stream 2. Trump had the courage to impose sanctions under the bipartisan sanctions legislation we passed into law. The Cruz-Shaheen legislation passed in 2019, and the second wave of the Cruz-Shaheen bipartisan legislation passed in 2020. President Trump imposed. What did Joe Biden do? Waived it. What did Joe Biden do? Ignored the law. What did Joe Biden do? He gave a multibillion-dollar gift to Putin.

So, if any Democrat meant a word they said about Russia, we have got to see them standing here. You will note the Democratic side of the floor is largely empty.

But not only is Joe Biden's rhetoric and the Democrats' rhetoric on Russia not matched by their action, but we also know that Biden's actions don't meet the Democrats' rhetoric on climate.

ENVIRONMENTALISM AND CLIMATE

Mr. President, what I want to address now is environmentalism and climate, which President Biden and the left tells us are existential issues.

There is nothing mattering more, they say, than climate change; that if we don't fight climate change, Nebraska is going to be underwater, they tell us. They say we need to follow the example of our European allies in

agreements like the Paris accords, but the Nord Stream 2 pipeline will grind any European energy transition to a halt by making the Europeans even more dependent on Russian gas.

Now, some proponents have argued that the natural gas delivered by Nord Stream 2 could be kind of a transition technology, but the German Institute for Economic Research's senior energy expert described Nord Stream 2 on these issues as "unnecessary and inefficient."

More analysis, published again just last week, projected that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline would emit over 100 million metric tons of CO₂ per year, plus fugitive methane.

The gas that Nord Stream 2 would deliver compares very badly to the alternative, and that is LNG, liquid natural gas.

In 2019, the U.S. Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Lab published a study showing that "U.S. LNG shipped to European markets has 41 percent less lifecycle emissions than if those same countries were to receive natural gas from another predominant producer like Russia."

Listen to that again because our Democratic colleagues love to pound the table how carbon is the greatest threat on the planet.

Well, Joe Biden is saddling Europe with an energy option that produces much more CO₂ than American LNG. American LNG, 41 percent less carbon dioxide.

If they believe their rhetoric, you would see Democrats standing up to Joe Biden. If Joe Biden believed his rhetoric, I guess you would see Joe Biden standing up to himself.

If John Kerry believed his rhetoric, in between his flights on a private jet, where John Kerry has the carbon footprint of a small town, in between his pontificating and lecturing American workers they just need to learn to code, if John Kerry believed climate was this existential disaster, he would be standing up, saying: President Biden, why are you defying Congress, defying the European Union, and giving Putin a multibillion-dollar gift that produces more CO₂?

There is no argument from the left or the right under which Nord Stream 2 is a good idea, but especially on the basis of what the left tells us are their most important issues: Russia, Russia, Russia. It is a disaster on Russia, Russia, Russia.

CO₂? It is a disaster on CO₂.

You know, Twitter today has lit up with a certain European teenager who is fond of lecturing the world about insufficient fealty to climate. And she responded to American leaders who, to use her words, say "blah, blah, blah" when it comes to climate.

I got to say, our Democratic colleagues, this Democratic administration, when it comes to Nord Stream 2, their only answer is: Blah, blah, blah.

They don't have an answer that they are resulting in—what was the figure

again? Let's actually get that figure right—100 million metric tons of CO₂ per year.

Congratulations. The next time you give a speech saying that you want to double Americans' electricity bills, you want to bankrupt working families because of CO₂, remember, you didn't seem worried about it when it was the Russians producing the CO₂ in a way that hurts Europe, hurts our allies, and hurts America.

Look, I get party politics. People want to stand and support their party. I get it. When there is a Republican President, Republicans support them, generally. When there is a Democratic President, Democrats support them, generally. That is the way it works. That is not terribly shocking.

But is it asking too much for even one of the Democrats to believe what they have said for the last 5 years?

Throughout the course of these remarks, you know who I have quoted more than anyone else?

Senate Democrats. I have quoted their own remarks.

Senate Democrats understand Nord Stream 2 is a disaster. They understand it is harmful. They understand it is bad for America. Where they just can't screw up the courage is when it comes to standing up to a Democratic President.

By the way, they are perfectly happy to yell at Donald Trump. I get that. And to be clear, when we had a Republican President in Donald Trump, I pressed the Trump administration hard on Nord Stream 2, even though we are the same party. I was not remotely shy about pressing the Trump administration.

There are 50 Democrats in this Chamber. Is there one who believed Russia, Russia, Russia? Or was that all empty politics? Is there one who believes their hyperbolic rhetoric on CO₂ and climate? Or is that all just blah, blah, blah?

It is real simple. The Biden administration has a chance to fix this. Just this weekend, the German people voted out the Merkel government. The entire reason Joe Biden went down this foolhardy disastrous path was to kiss up to Angela Merkel. Well, you know what. She is gone. Her party is gone. They are out of power. And so Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS have been given a present—a present of the chance to pull victory out of the jaws of defeat.

We had victory from 2019 to 2020, where we shut down the pipeline. Republicans and Democrats together in Congress had come together and shut down the pipeline. Putin had lost; America had won.

Joe Biden comes into office, and now Putin wins, America loses. That ain't good. That ain't good in Michigan. It ain't good in Arizona. It ain't good in any State in this country. And Joe Biden can fix it if he simply accepts the gifts the German voters have given him, reverse his course, and follow his U.S. law.

Let's stop the Biden-Putin pipeline. Let's give an opportunity for President Biden to pull his name off the pipeline.

By the way, if he were to do so, I will come to this floor and I will sing Joe Biden's praises for doing the right thing, for following the law, for standing up for America, for standing up to Russia, for defending our European allies.

But, sadly, I am not holding my breath. I think the hubris of office, stubbornness, is likely to keep the Biden administration digging in.

In the Senate, I am going to use every tool I have to try to press them to change their minds. And I would call on—is there even one Democrat with the courage to take on Russia?

Time will tell.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to point out the failures of the Biden administration's foreign policies, and specifically President Biden's failures in addition to that of his administration, because President Biden ran for President based on basically two things: what he described as his competence and as his foreign policy expertise.

He has failed miserably at both. It has been nearly a month since President Biden withdrew from Afghanistan.

And what about the Taliban?

Well, right now, they are more powerful than ever. They have billions and billions of dollars' worth of high-tech military equipment. It is beyond their wildest dreams.

Where did they get their weapons?

Well, they got them from the United States of America.

As we hear on nightly news broadcasts, and as we know from what we are hearing at home, there are hundreds of Americans still stranded behind enemy lines. The administration doesn't want to admit a number, but there are hundreds of Americans stranded behind enemy lines, if not more.

The detrimental consequences for America are only beginning.

Our friends are furious. And our enemies? They are emboldened by what has happened in Afghanistan.

Earlier this month, I visited with our NATO allies. Our allies are enraged. And a host of foreign policy mistakes by President Biden, in my opinion and in theirs, are irreversible.

Here are just a few examples:

Angela Merkel's designated successor in Germany called our Afghanistan withdrawal "the biggest debacle" in the history of NATO.

President Biden didn't mind offending our Canadian allies when he shut down the Keystone XL Pipeline. Months later, he gave Vladimir Putin the green light to build the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, and we just heard Senator CRUZ talking about that.

Remember, this pipeline is a geopolitical weapon that Putin is going to use to hold our European allies hostage—hostage for money and hostage for energy.

President Duda in Poland, he said recently the Nord Stream 2 giveaway is “grounds for reflection on relations with the United States.”

France was so offended with President Biden, at one point they recalled their ambassador. Never happened in American history. Go back all the way to the 1700s. France is a nuclear power. It is one of our closest allies.

This is Presidential incompetence on an unprecedented scale. Our allies see the incompetence. Our enemies not only see it, they can smell it. China has said so publicly that Afghanistan shows Americans cannot defend our allies anymore.

Now China is threatening Taiwan and building more than 200 missile silos. Iran has accelerated its nuclear program. According to Israel, Iran is only a few weeks away from having enough material to build a nuclear weapon.

And on the 20th anniversary of September 11, 2001, American troops in Iraq were attacked.

Russia is preparing to test a nuclear cruise missile near the Arctic Circle.

North Korea is expanding uranium enrichment; and just days after America withdrew from Afghanistan, North Korea tested two ballistic missiles.

In every area and region of the world, our Nation—America's interests are in retreat. Our enemies are on the march. America has grown weaker under Joe Biden; our enemies have grown stronger under Joe Biden.

Because of President Biden's incompetence, mismanagement, and weakness, we are all, as citizens of this country, less safe.

When I think of the last 8 months, I am reminded of something that former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said. And, remember, he was Secretary of Defense under President Obama.

He said: “Joe Biden has been wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue of the past four decades.”

Forty years of being wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue. At the time he said that, it had been four decades. Now Joe Biden is President of the United States, and it is five decades.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CHINA

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, last week, President Biden went to the United Nations and he announced his capitulation to the Chinese Communist Party. The message was clear from what he did—and did not—say.

In Joe Biden's 30-minute-long monologue on the state of the world, he never once even said the name of the world's greatest threat to peace, stability, and democracy: China. He never said it once. He refused to even say the word “China.” Nor did he mention Tibet, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or practically any of the victims of Chinese communist aggression.

Now, President Biden did mention the “targeting and oppression” of minorities in Xinjiang Province in China's northwest, yet he left mysteriously vague who was responsible for all that targeting and oppression. He blithely lumped Xinjiang with other abuses around the world as if it was just one area of deep concern among many.

But the concentration camps in Xinjiang are not just another problem. They are proof of the most systematic genocide and ethnic cleansing campaign occurring in the world today, perpetrated by one of the most advanced and powerful regimes on Earth, personally approved by the Chinese Communist leader Xi Jinping. Leaked documents make it clear that Chairman Xi is responsible for this campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Let me explain how brutal it is. The Chinese Communist Party are sterilizing women in Xinjiang Province so they cannot procreate and create more of their ethnic minority. If they can't do that, then they are being brutally raped by Han Chinese men. That is what is happening in Xinjiang Province, in addition to the internment of millions of religious and ethnic minorities. It is not just your run-of-the-mill targeting and oppression.

President Biden also referred to China implicitly—because he didn't say the word—on another occasion in his speech when he said that the United States is “not seeking a new Cold War.”

Of course, we are not seeking a war of any kind, cold or hot. That is the last thing that the United States would ever want. But, still, that is an astonishing assertion, because whether we seek it or not, China has been waging a Cold War on America and our workers and our factories and our militaries and our way of life for decades. The only question is whether we will win or lose. Under President Biden, we are losing.

A strong leader—a competent leader—would seek to win this Cold War thrust upon the United States in the manner of those who went before us facing enemies like Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and Soviet Russia. Instead, in the manner of appeasers the

world over, President Biden hopes to make peace with China by indulging its aggression and refusing to even say his name.

Now, if you think this is restoring some norm of longstanding providence, that you don't go to the United Nations General Assembly and speak the name of your adversaries who are committing acts of naked aggression and crimes against humanity, I would point out that Barack Obama repeatedly—repeatedly—called out Russia by name in 2014 for its invasion of Ukraine, and let's just say that President Obama was not exactly a Cold warrior.

Now as a result, Chairman Xi is issuing imperious orders, and the Biden administration is rushing to fill them like a short-order cook at a diner on Saturday morning. Early in his administration, President Biden lifted restrictions on Confucius Institutes, which are little more than spy outposts on our universities. He gutted Trump-era rules protecting our electrical grid from Chinese influence, and he shut down a State Department investigation into the origins of the Wuhan coronavirus.

Then, in July, China's Foreign Minister handed two lists of new demands to Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, stating that the United States must stop so-called wrongdoings in order to get back in Beijing's good graces.

Similarly, when the so-called climate czar, John Kerry, asked for China's help, the Communist Party responded that it would consider polluting a little less if the United States would shut up about China's campaign of genocide and other human rights abuses.

Now any self-respecting administration that believes in American strength, pride, and honor would have told Chairman Xi that he is in no position to be making such demands. Instead, this administration is going down the page, ticking off boxes like an obedient underling.

When a reporter asked John Kerry if the administration would press China on its horrific human rights abuses, Kerry responded that, “life is always full of tough choices.”

Pathetic.

Around the same time, Biden's Commerce Secretary called for “robust commercial engagement” and to “mitigate any potential tensions” between United States and China. She even promised to bring delegations of U.S. business leaders to China to pad the Communist bottom line even further.

She calls to mind what is attributed to Lenin: that capitalists will sell Communists the rope they will use to hang us all.

Pathetic.

Over the weekend, in his most recent act of pathetic weakness, the Biden Department of Justice surrendered Huawei's criminal CFO and princess, Meng Wanzhou, without punishing her for evading U.S. sanctions. She received a hero's welcome when her plane

touched down in China. And moments after her release, China released two innocent Canadians it had taken hostage to secure Meng's release. So Beijing's hostage-taking worked exactly as planned. Pathetic.

All of this self-inflicted humiliation was avoidable. The fact is that China is in no position to deliver ultimatums to us. It is America that ought to be making demands to China.

Here's a few things that would actually pave a path to true reconciliation:

First and foremost, we ought to demand that China finally admit what almost everyone knows is certainly true: that the coronavirus pandemic started in a lab in Wuhan. Xi Jinping should then give a groveling televised apology to the world, agree to end all gain-of-function research using deadly pathogens, and pay damages to his victims around the world who have died or suffered because of his regime's incompetence and malevolence.

Second, we ought to demand that China rebid the 2022 Winter Olympics until the Chinese regime ends its ethnic cleansing, slave labor, mass murder, mass sterilization, and systematic rape of ethnic and religious minorities. It is too morally tainted to host such a prestigious event.

Third, we ought to demand that China end its spree of intellectual property theft. Today, China is responsible for up to 80 percent—80 percent—of intellectual property theft committed against the United States, and is the subject of nearly half of all FBI counterintelligence cases for economic espionage. This theft has to stop.

Fourth, we should demand that China renounce its imperial ambitions. It must agree to stop the Belt and Road Initiative, disclaim its ambition of conquering Taiwan, abide by its treaty obligations regarding Hong Kong, and end its sinister and provocative military buildup.

If these conditions are met, China will be on the path of making amends for its many crimes. It is up to America to hold China accountable for these crimes. After all, we are the global leader, not China. We don't require China's forgiveness or favor. Our conscience is clean.

Our Nation is great. We are the Nation that threw off the shackles of an empire, settled a continent, saved the world, and then saved it again and again. The United States has been the greatest enemy of tyranny the world over. We do not cower before tyrants. We look them in the eye and call them by their true name and tell them what they really are: evil.

President Biden ought to remember that the next time he speaks to the world on behalf of the American people.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON ROBINSON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Robinson nomination?

Mr. CARDIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL).

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 389 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin	Heinrich	Portman
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Romney
Booker	Kaine	Rosen
Brown	Kelly	Sanders
Burr	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Capito	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Lujan	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Tester
Casey	Markey	Tillis
Collins	Menendez	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warnock
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Durbin	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—41

Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Rounds
Blunt	Hagerty	Rubio
Boozman	Hawley	Sasse
Braun	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Inhofe	Shelby
Cotton	Johnson	Sullivan
Cramer	Kennedy	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Toomey
Cruz	Lee	Tuberville
Daines	Lummis	Wicker
Ernst	Marshall	Young
Fischer	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—6

Feinstein	Murphy	Sinema
Moran	Paul	Stabenow

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN).

Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jessica Lewis, of Ohio, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 354.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rohit Chopra, of the District of Columbia, to be Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection for a term of five years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 354, Rohit Chopra, of the District of Columbia, to be Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection for a term of five years.

Charles E. Schumer, Christopher Murphy, Martin Heinrich, Edward J. Markey, Patty Murray, Tina Smith, Tammy Baldwin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Brian Schatz, Tim Kaine, Alex Padilla, Tammy Duckworth, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Jacky Rosen, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Gary C. Peters.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 293.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Tracy Stone-Manning, of Montana, to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented

under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 293, Tracy Stone-Manning, of Montana, to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

Charles E. Schumer, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Cory A. Booker, Sherrod Brown, Patrick J. Leahy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Gary C. Peters, Michael F. Bennet, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Benjamin L. Cardin, Patty Murray, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Duckworth, Robert Menendez, Bernard Sanders, Mark R. Warner, Richard J. Durbin.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, September 28, be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session to be in a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY K. STAMPER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, one of the most ubiquitous technologies in the world today is the cell phone. According to Pew Research, a stunning 97 percent of Americans own some sort of mobile device. These devices are critical to our everyday lives, keeping us connected to one another while also serving as a gateway to entire sectors of our economy. Most Americans probably do not realize that they are holding a piece of Vermont in their hands every time they use their phone, but thanks to engineers at GlobalFoundries in Essex Junction, every cell phone in the world contains a chip manufactured in my home State.

Today, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the efforts of one of those engineers, Anthony "Tony" Stamper of Burlington and thank him for his contributions to the global innovation ecosystem from his corner of Vermont. Tony retired this summer from GlobalFoundries after 30 years of semiconductor engineering at the Essex facility. During Tony's celebrated career, he has been responsible for over 500 patented inventions, making him one of the world's top 100 most prolific inventors of all time.

Tony's leadership at GlobalFoundries has helped keep Vermont at the fore-

front of an ever-changing industry for over 70 years. In 2015, GlobalFoundries acquired IBM's Essex plant and their talented workforce. Thanks to Tony and Essex innovators like him, the Vermont GlobalFoundries facility leads the industry in manufacturing radio frequency power semiconductors.

While Tony has been a prolific inventor, U.S. Patent No. 6,310,300 is one of his most notable inventions. It solved the significant problem that the space between an insulation layer and a metal wire in a chip would degrade over time. He and his team members created a barrier layer that prevented degradation and allowed for much smaller metal wires on the chip, hence much smaller chips. The invention has been used in every chip produced in the last 20 years.

Tony is not only an accomplished inventor but has repeatedly led teams of engineers to utilize these inventions to create leading edge products for high-speed computing and mobile communications. Tony has been a dedicated mentor and teacher to a new generation of inventors, which led him to be nominated for the GlobalFoundries Diversity and Inclusion Inventorship Champion Award. He knows that collaboration is the key ingredient to successful innovation and has fostered that kind of environment in all of the invention teams he has led.

Tony's story shows that innovators can thrive anywhere in the country, not just in Silicon Valley. I know his fellow engineers, who have relied on his expertise over the years, will feel his absence and miss him dearly. As he embarks on this next exciting part of his life, I want to acknowledge Tony's work and thank him for his decades of service to Vermont and the industry. Marcelle and I join his friends at GlobalFoundries and wish him the best of luck.

RECOGNIZING THE FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM AT HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment today to recognize the incredible impact of Farm to School programs in Vermont and across the country and the great work of Vermont students, their schools, and their broader communities to improve access to healthy food options.

Since 2000, Vermont Food Education Every Day—FEED—has facilitated collaboration between schools and farms in Vermont, helping cafeterias to source meals locally and working with schools to institute curricular and co-curricular programming to educate students on local food systems. In 2010, I was proud to author the national Farm to School Program in the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act. Since then, Vermont FEED and its Farm to School programs have become a national benchmark, with Farm to School programs now operating in all 50 States and the District of Columbia.

A few weeks ago, I had the chance to speak with students from Harwood Union High School about their Farm to School program. For the past 15 years, Harwood has sourced its food locally and worked with Vermont FEED to develop opportunities for students, teachers, and staff to connect with local farmers beyond the cafeteria. For 5 years, Harwood's student-led Farm to School Club has coordinated educational programming, farm visits, and recipe competitions to help students and staff to experience local agriculture and the Vermont food system. Even through the COVID-19 pandemic, the Harwood Farm to School Club adapted its programming by shifting to virtual tours of local farms and at-home recipe contests.

As a truly Vermont-grown initiative, I have always been proud of the impressive adoption of Farm to School programs in communities nationwide. In April, I reintroduced the Farm to School Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation that would increase mandatory funding for the Farm to School Grant Program, ensuring that more schools, students, and farmers can take advantage of the program. And every year in the annual appropriations process, I have worked to increase discretionary funding for this popular program.

The Farm to School Club at Harwood serves as a testament to the importance of community engagement and the educational, economic, and nutritional benefits of Farm to School programs. The club was recently featured in an article published by Seven Days, and I ask unanimous consent that the article, "Vermont Leads National Farm-to-School Movement, and Harwood Union High School Demonstrates How" be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Seven Days, Sept. 7, 2021]

VERMONT LEADS NATIONAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL MOVEMENT, AND HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL DEMONSTRATES HOW

(By Melissa Pasanen)

On August 19 at Shelburne Farms, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack heard from 10 Vermonters involved with the state's farm-to-school program.

The group included school food service directors, nonprofit and government leaders in agriculture and child nutrition, a vegetable farmer, and Jeswin Antony, a 16-year-old Harwood Union High School student.

When it was Antony's turn to speak, he introduced himself as a leader of Harwood's farm-to-school club. The teen explained that he was 3 when his family moved from India to Waterbury. "My first experiences with American cuisine were in the lunchroom at school," he said.

The chicken was Vermont-raised, and the vegetables were grown in the school garden, Antony recounted. "From a young age, I was taught and I saw that this food is grown locally, and it tastes better and is more nutritious," he said.

The Shelburne gathering followed Leahy's early August announcement that he had secured committee approval to include \$5 million in the federal budget to establish a National Farm-to-School Institute at Shelburne Farms.

The proposed national institute will expand the reach of the existing Vermont-based Northeast Farm to School Institute currently run by Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day), a nonprofit partnership managed by Shelburne Farms and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont.

Founded in 2000, Vermont FEED has been instrumental in fostering connections between Vermont schools and farms—from the cafeteria to the classroom—in support of improved childhood nutrition, local agriculture and lifelong wellness.

The organization's influence spread beyond the state's borders until it was codified when Vermont FEED established the Northeast Farm to School Institute in 2010. The institute has helped share best practices via training and coaching in more than 100 schools and districts in New England and New York.

States from Massachusetts to Nebraska have also worked with the Northeast Farm to School Institute to build their own successful statewide programs.

Shortly after the Mississippi Farm to School Network was established in 2015, co-director Sunny Baker visited Vermont for a workshop.

"We knew right away Vermont was the model," Baker said over the phone. "It's not one-size-fits-all. It's about putting power back into the communities while providing formal support to help them connect the three Cs," she said, referring to cafeteria, classroom and community. "It's less top-down, more roots-up."

Anna Mullen, spokesperson for the National Farm to School Network, described Vermont as a national leader in creating and propagating effective farm-to-school models and in leveraging critical legislative support. In a phone interview, she noted that the state was the first to create a farm-to-school grant program in 2006 and that Leahy has long been "a huge champion" of the movement at the federal level.

The pending federal line item would fund expansion of "a really impactful . . . coaching and support model that brings together teams to fit the needs of their school and achieve the vision of their own community," Mullen said. The proposal to take it national "is a testament to a model that's really helping and working."

At Shelburne Farms in August, Antony continued to share why he was drawn to farm-to-school. In middle school, he said, he took a sustainability course that taught him about the food system. Joining the farm-to-school club deepened his understanding of the "inner workings" of how schools source and prepare food, Antony explained.

During the pandemic, he and his co leaders worked hard to keep fellow members connected to the club and to one another through virtual farm tours and Harvest of the Month recipe contests, Antony said. They created recipes with beets, sweet potatoes and dairy at home, for example, and then took virtual tours of farms that produced those foods.

"Keeping the students engaged, telling them where their food comes from, making them informed about what they eat really creates a better environment and healthier kids," Antony concluded.

"I wish I'd had you testify before the committees," Leahy said, drawing an appreciative chuckle from the group.

A couple weeks after meeting the senator and agriculture secretary, Antony met with

Seven Days in the Harwood cafeteria along with three other teens in the farm-to-school club. Joining the four were Paul Morris, co-director of food and nutrition services for the Harwood Unified Union School District; Paul Kramer, a teacher and club faculty adviser; and Jen Dreimiller, a school counselor who is also on Harwood's farm-to-school team. That team is composed of teachers, staff, students and community members working to deepen the high school's farm-to-school efforts.

Like Antony, Miranda Rayfield of Fayston and Macie Whalen of Northfield are 16 and just started 11th grade. The trio leads the club. The students look forward to getting back into the cafeteria kitchen with "chef Paul," as they call Morris, to design, prepare and serve Harvest of the Month taste tests. While they enjoyed the monthly recipe contests that Antony had described to Leahy and Vilsack, sharing the results of their efforts remotely wasn't the same.

"We provided the food, and [members of the school community] got to make something out of it and share it via a slideshow we'd show at an online school assembly," Whalen explained. Photographs of beet recipes included a mouthwatering array of several different beet-chocolate cakes; beet-tahini pasta; a beet and potato roesti; and a version of halwa, the traditional Indian sweet, made with beets.

"Some people think vegetable are 'gross and disgusting,'" Whalen said. "But then when they cook with them and see or taste what others have made, they might change their mind."

"When you share it with the whole school, it gets more attention," Antony added.

During the pandemic, the students drew other benefits from their shared cooking experience. "You were at home, locked down. It gave us a great way to connect," Whalen said. "Like, Jeswin's sweet potato and black bean curry—it looked so good! [We were asking each other,] 'Did he send the recipe?' It was really cool to be connected through food."

Haley MacDonald, 13, of Moretown, joined the club last year when she was in seventh grade. With the kale she received through the club, she made two kinds of kale chips at home: one salted and the other sweetened with a little maple syrup.

"It was my first time making them myself," MacDonald said proudly in the cafeteria. Her family, including her 9-year-old twin brothers, inhaled them. "They were gone in a minute."

"It also helped me realize there are lots of local farms," MacDonald said. "Like, 'Oh, I got kale from there.' It's really cool to be able to cook with what they grow and support them."

During a virtual farm visit to Butterworks Farm in Westfield, Whalen described excitedly, "They showed us their cows and their butter compared to store-bought butter. You could literally see the difference in color."

"And texture," Rayfield said. "You could almost feel the love."

"I've gotten a whole community out of it," Whalen continued. In addition to the teachers and chef Paul at school, she said, that includes the farmers. "It's a community beyond Harwood Union High School."

The 5-year-old club is just one aspect of the district's well-established farm-to-school program.

Morris, the food and nutrition services co-director, has been sourcing from local farms all 15 years he has worked at Harwood. But, while the cafeteria was lauded initially for its fresh, locally sourced menu, Morris said there was untapped opportunity. "It was not super connected to teachers and staff. It was us trying to push it out," he said.

Enter the Northeast Farm to School Institute. Six years ago, a team of Harwood school and community members started meeting regularly with a coach from Vermont FEED to build on efforts in the school kitchen. That was what "kind of got the ball rolling," Morris said.

"The program really started to gain momentum when students had experience outside the cafeteria," he said. "They didn't want to talk about it; they wanted to do things."

This fall, Harwood students will return to a neighboring nonprofit farm, Living Tree Alliance in Moretown. There, they have moved mulch, planted hazelnuts, made sauerkraut and learned how the farmers rotate their small flock of sheep to graze different paddocks. The farm has sold Harwood cabbage and potatoes for use in its cafeteria.

One Harwood civics and social studies teacher used grant money to build a hoop house behind the school in which students grow salad greens. These, too, become cafeteria fare.

The farm-to-school team came up with a local food challenge offered to all home-rooms: Students tasted something locally grown and learned about the concept of food miles and the benefits of buying closer to home. Farm-to-school club members even collaborated with students in a graphic design course to develop a logo emblazoned with a shovel and fork and the words "community, cafeteria, classroom."

Kramer, the club's faculty adviser, said he was pleased when students asked how they could build advocacy skills and help others access local food. Last year, a group of club members partnered with a local gleaner organization to pick apples at a Randolph orchard to donate to area food shelves. Antony and a student who has now graduated worked with Vermont FEED to testify in front of the state legislature.

"We are very grateful to eat this healthy, local food, but not everyone gets to," Antony said in the cafeteria.

"The students are seeing the larger picture," Kramer said. "Farm-to-school is a great, tangible lens for kids to understand things like equity and social justice. They are understanding how things are connected and using that understanding to find leverage points to solve problems."

Being involved in farm-to-school, Antony said, has opened his eyes to the complexity of the food system and to his own ability to make a difference.

"It's all intertwined: nutrition, the education system, the legislative system, even waste," he said. "There's massive change we can do in all those spheres. I want to take some action."

CONGRATULATING THE VERMONT LAKE MONSTERS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I would like to take a moment today to recognize the iconic Vermont Lake Monsters and their championship victory in the team's first season as members of the Futures Collegiate Baseball League. The Vermont Lake Monsters have seen various iterations over the years, and the determination, grit, and resilience of the team's players, coaches, staff, and fans are clear to all Vermonters and fans of the team.

The Lake Monsters began in 1994 with establishment of the Vermont Expos, a minor league baseball team affiliated with the Montreal Expos. When the Montreal Expos moved to

Washington, DC, and became the Nationals, the Vermont Expos changed their affiliation and their name, becoming the Lake Monsters in 2004 and affiliated with the Oakland Athletics. When Major League Baseball elected to shrink the minor league in 2019, the Lake Monsters sadly lost their affiliation. The loss of affiliation and the prospect of the closure of the Lake Monsters were devastating for the baseball community in Vermont.

Luckily, the Lake Monsters seized the opportunity to join the Futures Collegiate Baseball League, bringing the team back to Centennial Field in Burlington after a 2-year hiatus. Quickly, a new coaching staff was hired, and a roster filled. The Lake Monsters returned to Centennial Field on May 21, beginning a fantastic season run that brought them to a championship title on August 20.

The Lake Monsters have garnered an immense following in Vermont and have become a mainstay of our community. The team, their games, and their fans have been an intrinsic aspect of the summertime fun for so many Vermonters. The resiliency of the Lake Monsters and their resounding victory in their return to the field, particularly at a time of such turmoil and uncertainty in our world, brings a welcome sense of joy, hope, and levity to our community.

Congratulations to the Vermont Lake Monsters for their championship victory; may your success continue for years to come. Vermonters will look forward to going to Centennial Field for a game next summer to enjoy some peanuts, Cracker Jacks, and a Lake Monsters win.

REMEMBERING CHRISTOPHER CARTWRIGHT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I rise today to honor the life of Christopher Cartwright, who passed away in May 2021, at age 52. Chris was a dedicated civil servant with a brilliant mind, a vast well of patience, and boundless compassion. He spent most of his 30-year career with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and served most recently as the Director of NOAA's Budget Office.

Chris created an environment of trust and collegiality everywhere he went. He was unflappable in navigating the budget and appropriations process and always applied a calm and thoughtful approach to achieving NOAA's mission. Through it all, Chris was unfailingly kind and humble. His gentle leadership inspired his team and those around him to be better people, leaders, and public servants.

Chris was a proud graduate of Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, where last year he had the honor of leading the graduating class in recitation of the Athenian Oath. True to the oath he held so dear, Chris "strived unceasingly to quicken the public sense of

civic duty." We are grateful for his service.

REMEMBERING SUSAN BAYH

Mr. YOUNG. Madam President, I rise today in honor of one of the most beloved women in Indiana. An attorney, a First Lady, a wife, and a mother, Susan Bayh will always be remembered throughout Indiana for her grace and strength.

Susan Breshears was born in Los Angeles, CA, in 1959. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley and a juris doctorate from the University of Southern California. In 1978, she was named Miss Southern California. While working on Capitol Hill in the early 1980s, she met Evan Bayh. The two married in 1985. She became Indiana's First Lady in 1989, when Evan was elected Governor. In 1995, she gave birth to twins Birch Evans Bayh IV and Nicholas Bayh, becoming the first First Lady to have children while in office.

Susan was a talented attorney. She made a name for herself at some of the country's top law firms before joining Eli Lilly and Company to manage regulatory affairs. Later, she taught at Butler University and Indiana University. She passed away in February 2021 after a battle with brain cancer.

In Indiana, the Bayh name is famous, but as President Biden said, "Susan stood out as a single treasure." As Susan's loved ones and friends gather to remember her life at Washington National Cathedral this week, Hoosiers are grateful for the life she lived, the family she raised, and the legacy she has left behind.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING ROB AND PAM STEPHENS

• Mr. DAINES. Madam President, today I would like to honor the lives of Rob and Pam Stephens who were integral members of the Billings community. Both Rob and Pam had a passion for sharing their love of aviation with others. Tragically, on Sunday, September 26th, the Stephens were involved in a fatal plane crash with their son Riley. Riley was the only survivor.

With over 40 years of flying experience and more than 30 years as a professional airline pilot, Rob loved sharing his knowledge and expertise with others who aspired to become pilots themselves. In 2018, Rob founded Mission Aviation flight school, located at Montana's Laurel Municipal Airport, with the intentions of serving others in Yellowstone County who also wanted to pursue careers in aviation.

Most notably, Rob shared his skills and passion for flying with his two sons, Riley and Steele, both of whom have pursued their own careers in aviation and take pride in teaching the next generation of prospective pilots.

Rob and Pam will be dearly missed by their children Steele, Riley, and Piper, their friends in the aviation community, and so many more in the Billings area whose lives they touched. Piper recently served Montana as an intern in my Washington, DC office. As Riley continues to receive medical care, our prayers are with him and the entire Stephens family during this very difficult time. May God continue to bless and look over them.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Roberts, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

H.R. 3755. An act to protect a person's ability to determine whether to continue or end a pregnancy, and to protect a health care provider's ability to provide abortion services.

H.R. 5323. An act making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes.

S. 2868. A bill to temporarily extend the public debt limit until December 16, 2022.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2218. A communication from the Director of the Regulations Management Division, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Implementation of Telecommunications Provisions of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018" (RIN0572-AC48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2219. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Styrene-Maleic Anhydride Ethyl Amine Salt Copolymer; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 8960-01-OCSP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2220. A communication from the Deputy Administrator for Policy Support, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Non-Discretionary Quality Control Provisions of Title

IV of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018; Correction” (RIN0584-AE64) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 14, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2221. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the 2020 annual report of the Farm Credit Administration Regulator of the Farm Credit System; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2222. A communication from the Deputy Administrator for Policy Support, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Non-Discretionary Quality Control Provisions of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018” (RIN0584-AE64) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 13, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2223. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fluorenesulfone; Pesticide Tolerances” (FRL No. 8653-01-OCSP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 13, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2224. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual (NISOPM); Amendment” (RIN0790-AL41) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2021; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2225. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Privacy Act of 1974; Implementation (DoD 0007, Defense Reasonable Accommodation and Assistive Technology Records)” (RIN0790-AL14) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 13, 2021; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2226. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Commercial Activities Program” (RIN0790-AK91) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 13, 2021; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2227. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment” (RIN0790-AL18) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2021; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2228. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Improved Energy Security for Main Operating Bases in Europe” (RIN0750-AL15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2021; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2229. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Use of Firm-Fixed-Price Contracts for Foreign Military Sales” (RIN0750-AL37) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2021; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2230. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Admiral Craig S. Faller, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2231. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Gordon D. Peters, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2232. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting the report of an officer authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of lieutenant general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777a; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2233. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting the report of an officer authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of lieutenant general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777a; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2234. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting the report of an officer authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2235. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, a report relative to the issuance of an Executive Order addressing the situation in and in relation to northern Ethiopia, which has been marked by activities that threaten the peace, security, and stability of Ethiopia and the greater horn of Africa region; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2236. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Proclamation 7463 of September 11, 2001, with respect to the terrorist attacks on the United States; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2237. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13224 of September 23, 2001, with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2238. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13848 of September 12, 2018, with respect to the threat of foreign interference in or undermining public confidence in United States elections; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2239. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 12957 with respect to Iran; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2240. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13288 with respect to Zimbabwe; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2241. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13660 with respect to Ukraine; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2242. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13894 with respect to Syria; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2243. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the Department's activities during calendar year 2020 relative to the Equal Credit Opportunity Act; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. REED for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Air Force nomination of Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, to be General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Edward D. Casey, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Brig. Gen. Linda S. Hurry, to be Major General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Carla D. Riner, to be Brigadier General.

Navy nomination of Capt. Max G. McCoy, Jr., to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Air Force nomination of Col. Richard G. Adams, to be Brigadier General.

Marine Corps nomination of Lt. Gen. Karsten S. Heckl, to be Lieutenant General.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. David J. Julazadeh, to be Lieutenant General.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. Lance K. Landrum, to be Lieutenant General.

Marine Corps nomination of Col. Matthew S. Reid, to be Brigadier General.

Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Colin J. Kilrain, to be Vice Admiral.

Air Force nomination of Col. James D. Brantingham, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Jeffrey C. Coggin, to be Major General.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Xavier T. Brunson, to be Lieutenant General.

Space Force nomination of Brig. Gen. Gregory J. Gagnon, to be Brigadier General.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Jeffrey S. Scheidt, to be Rear Admiral.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Air Force nominations beginning with Ingrid C. Kaat and ending with Genevieve N. Minzyk, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Air Force nomination of Angelica Hawrysiak, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Katherine A. Abbott and ending with Banner Lee Sue Zimmerman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jon R. Alexander and ending with Peter H. Yuskat, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Timothy James Anderson and ending with Chad M. Whitson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brad C. Bordes and ending with Richard J. Zavadi, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Air Force nomination of Sarah E. Isbill, to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Nicole Marie Bermudez Beck and ending with Hermes Y. Silva, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 13, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Daniel C. Alder and ending with D016000, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 28, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Eric R. Adams and ending with Charles R. Zipperer, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 28, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Michelle M. Appalza and ending with D015670, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 28, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Thomas K. Brenton and ending with D010918, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 28, 2021.

Army nomination of Jose E. Santos-Martinez, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Donna J. Broussard, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Stephen W. Chu, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Jason R. Bradley, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with David W. Lewis and ending with Hugh D. West III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Paul E. Boccio and ending with Delphia C. Reno, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Dennis M. Bishop and ending with Scott T. Trexler, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Philip N.R. Estes and ending with Roderick V. Mathis, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Kim R. Clidas and ending with Benjamin W. Riley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Kelsy L. Abell and ending with Stephanie P. Tower, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Brian J. Ahern and ending with Bryan K. Yu, which

nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Anthony W. Adams and ending with D016183, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Marjorie Acsenvil and ending with Be Y. Yoo, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nomination of Malik J. Freeman, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Richard J. H. Gash, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Lucretia C. Portwine, to be Major.

Army nomination of Shilo S. Velasquez, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Daniel E. Torres, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Andrew Garcia IV, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with James L. Fuhrman and ending with Scott C. Valley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nomination of Mercedes Murillo, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Kathryn L. Adams and ending with Kevin R. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with James E. Adkins, Jr. and ending with Jason P. Wells, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with David J. Adam and ending with Chester D. Shermer, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Travis T. Elder and ending with Marcus D. Wisner, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Karen M. Hansen and ending with Karen F. Wiggins, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on August 4, 2021.

Army nomination of Bryan T. Jack, to be Major.

Army nomination of Marci J. Sam, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Jennifer M. A. Bromm, to be Major.

Army nomination of Travis C. Carpenter, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Michael C. Wallet, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Shawn D. Wray, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Jordan L. Woodburn, to be Major.

Army nomination of Corey M. James, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of David Melendez, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of John C. Boyle, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Jennifer N. Pendleton, to be Major.

Army nomination of Kevin A. Poole, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Daniel J. Carlson, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Dmitriy Kalantarov, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with David O. Anglin and ending with Douglas W. Moore, which nominations were received by

the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Lito D. Amande and ending with D016150, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Daniel C. Estaville and ending with Brian J. Harlan, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with George W. Boguslawski and ending with Matthew H. Watters, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Douglas F. Baker, Jr. and ending with Samuel S. Yi, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with David S. Bickell and ending with Robert T. Wilkins, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Victoria M. Adame and ending with Benjamin R. Thompson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Army nomination of Sean P. Mahoney, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Navy nomination of Spiros Kulubis, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of William T. T. Chen, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Craig A. Clutts, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Christopher J. Goodson, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Brett E. Grady, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Ignacio I. Mendiguren, to be Captain.

Navy nominations beginning with Hanif K. Bent and ending with Richard J. Wallace, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Twyla M. Arbuckle and ending with Keith D. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Aaron M. Ackerman and ending with Brandon M. Zoss, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Daniel A. Dierks and ending with Carl B. Steffer, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nomination of Wajahat Ali, to be Commander.

Navy nomination of Mason P. Jones, to be Commander.

Navy nomination of Jarrod M. Trant, to be Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with Dannemarc Atis and ending with Kyle E. Zunk, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Samuel O. Adjei and ending with Michael T. Zervas, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Peter L. Agdamag and ending with Cole C. Yoos, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Moronkeji S. Aderibigbe and ending with

Jonathan P. Zisko, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Leonardo D. Calderon and ending with Nicholas J. Gegg, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Susana Agudelouribe and ending with Daniel Zhang, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Marilyn A. H. Andersen and ending with Christopher P. Wilde, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Michael S. Ackman and ending with David J. Zart, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Ashley M. Belyea and ending with Lauren E. Yutchishen, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Devin M. Arneson and ending with Michelle L. T. Tucker, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Colin A. Barnard and ending with Natalia A. Widulinski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Jeremy M. Bullard and ending with Christopher J. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Matthew D. Akers and ending with Kelly Wu, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Brian T. Abe and ending with Tyler D. Young, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Macbride J. Abeasi and ending with Reico O. Taylor, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Nathan J. Admiraal and ending with Daniel A. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Andrew M. Adams and ending with Michael J. Ziarek, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Carl A. Grover and ending with Jason O. Lawrie, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Christopher S. Anderson and ending with David S. Wiley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Matthew C. Abare and ending with Keith E. Wilber, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Karima Ayesha and ending with Stacy L. Yu, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Emilee K. Baldini and ending with Michael F. Whittican, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Tuesday L. Adams and ending with Brenda M. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Scott E. Adams and ending with Charmaine R. Yap, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Christopher A. Adams and ending with James P. Williford, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Adeniyi S. Alatis and ending with Nathan S. Zundel, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Jon A. Angle and ending with Shannon L. Wright, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Carl K. Bodin and ending with Graham D. Ziemba, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Ebenezer Aniagyei and ending with Adam L. Zeiler, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 14, 2021.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. TUBERVILLE):

S. 2866. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Health and Human Services from restricting direct access by health care facilities to COVID-19 monoclonal antibody therapies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. THUNE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 2867. A bill to clarify the rights of Indians and Indian Tribes on Indian lands under the National Labor Relations Act; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 2868. A bill to temporarily extend the public debt limit until December 16, 2022; read the first time.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2869. A bill to temporarily limit the authority of the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to prescribe

chargeable premium rates for flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Program; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER:

S. 2870. A bill to create portable retirement and investment accounts for all Americans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 2871. A bill to establish a task force on the implications of amending the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to remove exemptions from environmental laws for spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to allow for consent-based siting of geologic repositories; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. HAGERTY):

S. 2872. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the adjusted gross income limitation for above-the-line deduction of expenses of performing artist employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2873. A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to establish or expand programs and activities to increase access to high-quality culturally competent trauma support and mental health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2874. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income payments under the Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program and certain amounts received under the Indian Health Professions Scholarships Program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 2875. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish the Cyber Incident Review Office in the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 2876. A bill to prioritize the efforts of, and to enhance coordination among, United States agencies to encourage countries in Central and Eastern Europe to improve the security of their telecommunications networks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 2877. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow for payments to certain individuals who dye fuel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HAGERTY (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 2878. A bill to codify in statute the establishment of the Office of Global Women's Issues and the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. 2879. A bill to provide that Executive Orders 14042 and 14043 shall have no force or effect; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 2880. A bill to amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020

to modify certain deadlines relating to the Commission on Combating Synthetic Opioid Trafficking; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 2881. A bill to assist States in improving guardianship oversight and data collection; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. OSSOFF (for himself, Mr. ROMNEY, and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. Res. 388. A resolution commemorating the 25th anniversary of the 1996 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games held in Atlanta, Georgia; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KING (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. Res. 389. A resolution supporting the designation of September 2021 as “National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. Res. 390. A resolution expressing appreciation for the State of Qatar’s efforts to assist the United States during Operation Allies Refuge; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. KAINE):

S. Res. 391. A resolution expressing concern about the rise in illicit mining and trafficking of gold in Latin America and the pervasive problem that such mining poses for the security, stability, and environment of the region; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. Res. 392. A resolution recognizing and supporting the goals and ideals of National Forensic Science Week; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. Res. 393. A resolution designating September 2021 as “National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month”; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 480

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 480, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the deduction for qualified business income.

S. 552

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 552, a bill to direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global basic education programs.

S. 809

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico

(Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 809, a bill to encourage and facilitate efforts by States and other stakeholders to conserve and sustain the western population of monarch butterflies, and for other purposes.

S. 864

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 864, a bill to extend Federal Pell Grant eligibility of certain short-term programs.

S. 976

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 976, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and to expand eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation paid to certain survivors of certain veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 1106

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1106, a bill to prohibit the sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 1116

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1116, a bill to amend chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, to create a presumption that a disability or death of a Federal employee in fire protection activities caused by any of certain diseases is the result of the performance of such employees duty, and for other purposes.

S. 1136

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1136, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the low-income housing credit, and for other purposes.

S. 1210

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 1210, a bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation of certain wildlife species, and for other purposes.

S. 1404

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1404, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company in recognition of their unique and distinguished service as a “Ghost Army” that conducted de-

ception operations in Europe during World War II.

S. 1408

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1408, a bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, J. Christopher Stevens, and Sean Smith, in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

S. 1544

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1544, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to streamline enrollment under the Medicaid program of certain providers across State lines, and for other purposes.

S. 1609

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1609, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that electrochromic glass qualifies as energy property for purposes of the energy credit.

S. 1813

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1813, a bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to support research on, and expanded access to, investigational drugs for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and for other purposes.

S. 1873

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 1873, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of multi-cancer early detection screening tests.

S. 1943

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1943, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to, and utilization of, bone mass measurement benefits under part B of the Medicare program by establishing a minimum payment amount under such part for bone mass measurement.

S. 1945

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1945, a bill to provide for the long-term improvement of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and for other purposes.

S. 2091

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms.

ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2091, a bill to amend the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to increase appropriations to Restaurant Revitalization Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 2125

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2125, a bill to divert Federal funding away from supporting the presence of police in schools and toward evidence-based and trauma informed services that address the needs of marginalized students and improve academic outcomes, and for other purposes.

S. 2221

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2221, a bill to restrict executive agencies from acting in contravention of Executive Order 13950, and for other purposes.

S. 2372

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the names of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) were added as cosponsors of S. 2372, a bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to make supplemental funds available for management of fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need as determined by State fish and wildlife agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 2390

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2390, a bill to allow Americans to receive paid leave time to process and address their own health needs and the health needs of their partners during the period following a pregnancy loss, an unsuccessful round of intrauterine insemination or of an assisted reproductive technology procedure, a failed adoption arrangement, a failed surrogacy arrangement, or a diagnosis or event that impacts pregnancy or fertility, to support related research and education, and for other purposes.

S. 2434

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2434, a bill to provide tax incentives that support local newspapers and other local media, and for other purposes.

S. 2593

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2593, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve Federal oversight of foreign funding in education.

S. 2649

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the name of the Senator from Tennessee

(Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2649, a bill to establish a demonstration program to provide integrated care for Medicare beneficiaries with end-stage renal disease, and for other purposes.

S. 2721

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2721, a bill to require the Internal Revenue Service to issue a report on the tax gap, to establish a fellowship program within the Internal Revenue Service to recruit mid-career tax professionals to create and participate in an audit task force, and for other purposes.

S. 2729

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2729, a bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a program through which eligible individuals may obtain vouchers for the purchase of connected devices, and for other purposes.

S. 2734

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2734, a bill to require Senate confirmation of the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

S. 2756

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2756, a bill to posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal, in commemoration of the service members who perished as a result of the attack in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021, during the evacuation of citizens of the United States and Afghan allies at Hamid Karzai International Airport, and for other purposes.

S. 2794

At the request of Mr. TUBERVILLE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2794, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase automatic maximum coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program and the Veterans' Group Life Insurance program, and for other purposes.

S. 2809

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2809, a bill to protect social security benefits and military pay and require that the United States Government to prioritize all obligations on the debt held by the public in the event that the debt limit is reached.

S. 2840

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2840, a bill to permit civil actions against the United States for COVID-19 vaccination mandates.

S. 2841

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2841, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to publicly disclose information regarding adverse effects of COVID-19 vaccines.

S. 2842

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2842, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to prohibit the Secretary of Defense from requiring that members of the Armed Forces receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and for other purposes.

S. 2843

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2843, a bill to prohibit the imposition of a fine, fee, or taxation on any person for violation of a COVID-19 vaccine mandate issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration or any other executive agency, and for other purposes.

S. 2844

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2844, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to publish all of its studies and findings related to COVID-19.

S. 2846

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2846, a bill to require Federal agencies to acknowledge, accept, and agree to truthfully present, natural immunity pertaining to COVID-19 pursuant to promulgating certain regulations.

S. 2847

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2847, a bill to prohibit the Federal Government from mandating vaccination against COVID-19 for interstate travel.

S. 2848

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr.

TUBERVILLE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2848, a bill to exempt individuals with a personal health concern from complying with a Federal COVID-19 vaccine mandate, and for other purposes.

S. 2849

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2849, a bill to stipulate that nothing in Federal law provides a Federal agency with the authority to mandate that an individual be inoculated by a COVID-19 vaccine.

S. 2850

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2850, a bill to exempt individuals from complying with a Federal COVID-19 vaccine mandate on the basis of a personal belief, and for other purposes.

S. 2851

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2851, a bill to require an audit of COVID-19 relief funding.

S. 2854

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2854, a bill to allow for the transfer and redemption of abandoned savings bonds.

S. 2862

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2862, a bill to prohibit the National Archives and Records Administration from including content warnings alongside founding documents of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2863

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2863, a bill to require the imposition of sanctions with respect to the Taliban in Afghanistan, and for other purposes.

S. 2865

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2865, a bill to improve the unemployment insurance program.

S. RES. 321

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a

cosponsor of S. Res. 321, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to reduce traffic fatalities to zero by 2050.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 2868. A bill to temporarily extend the public debt limit until December 16, 2022; read the first time.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

S. 2868

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF PUBLIC DEBT LIMIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, shall not apply for the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on December 16, 2022.

(b) SPECIAL RULE RELATING TO OBLIGATIONS ISSUED DURING EXTENSION PERIOD.—Effective on December 17, 2022, the limitation in effect under section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, shall be increased to the extent that—

(1) the face amount of obligations issued under chapter 31 of such title and the face amount of obligations whose principal and interest are guaranteed by the United States Government (except guaranteed obligations held by the Secretary of the Treasury) outstanding on December 17, 2022, exceeds

(2) the face amount of such obligations outstanding on the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) EXTENSION LIMITED TO NECESSARY OBLIGATIONS.—An obligation shall not be taken into account under subsection (b)(1) unless the issuance of such obligation was necessary to fund a commitment incurred pursuant to law by the Federal Government that required payment before December 17, 2022.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 388—COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES HELD IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Mr. OSSOFF (for himself, Mr. ROMNEY, and Mr. CASSIDY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 388

Whereas the city of Atlanta hosted the world during—

(1) the 1996 Olympic Summer Games (referred to in this preamble as the “Summer Games”) from July 19, 1996, to August 4, 1996; and

(2) the 1996 Paralympic Games (referred to in this preamble as the “Paralympic Games”) from August 16, 1996, to August 25, 1996;

Whereas the Summer Games and Paralympic Games honored the centennial anniversary of the founding of the modern Olympic Movement while creating a legacy of their own;

Whereas Muhammad Ali lit the Olympic Cauldron at the Summer Games Opening

Ceremony, recognizing his Olympic success and lifelong fight for racial justice;

Whereas 10,320 athletes from 197 countries came together in 271 Summer Games events across 37 disciplines and 26 sports;

Whereas the 1996 United States Olympic Team’s largest roster ever of 646 athletes finished first in the medal tally for the first time since 1984 with 44 gold medals and 32 silver medals;

Whereas over 2,000,000 people visited Atlanta during the Summer Games, and nearly 3,500,000,000 people watched the Summer Games from afar;

Whereas over 3,500 athletes from 104 countries competed in the Paralympic Games, and reminded the world that every individual can compete regardless of their disposition;

Whereas the Paralympic Games were the first Paralympic Games—

(1) to attract worldwide corporate sponsorships; and

(2) be televised in the United States;

Whereas over 380,000 individuals attended the Paralympic Games, which were opened by Vice President Al Gore;

Whereas 3,808 athletes from 104 countries came together in 508 Paralympic Games events across 20 sports;

Whereas the 1996 United States Paralympic Team won the most gold and overall medals;

Whereas the Summer Games relied on the partnership of local Atlanta-based businesses, leading to international recognition and growth for those businesses;

Whereas, on July 27, 1996, the people of Atlanta and other United States citizens persevered in the face of a tragic bombing at the Summer Games;

Whereas the Summer Games and Paralympic Games created an estimated 84,000 jobs in Atlanta during the Games and an additional 293,000 jobs afterward;

Whereas Centennial Olympic Park led a revitalization of Downtown Atlanta, and is still a central gathering spot to this day; and

Whereas the success of the Summer Games and Paralympic Games helped turn Atlanta into one of the world’s leading hosts for large-scale sporting events: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the contributions that were made by—

(A) the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games;

(B) the hundreds of Team USA athletes and the thousands of international athletes who competed in the 1996 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games; and

(C) the people, companies, and communities that made the 1996 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games possible;

(2) recognizes that the 1996 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games left a lasting legacy in Atlanta, with many of the venues from those Games still serving the community; and

(3) commemorates the 25th anniversary of the 1996 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games held in Atlanta, Georgia.

SENATE RESOLUTION 389—SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF SEPTEMBER 2021 AS “NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION RECOVERY MONTH”

Mr. KING (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 389

Whereas the theme for National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in 2021 is “Recovery is for Everyone: Every Person, Every Family, Every Community”;

Whereas more than 92,000 individuals in the United States suffered a fatal alcohol or drug overdose during 2020, an increase of approximately 30 percent as compared to 2019;

Whereas during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, increased isolation and reduced or disrupted access to treatment programs have contributed to an increase in individuals reporting anxiety and depressive disorders when compared to the previous year, and 13 percent of Americans reported starting or increasing substance use;

Whereas, in 2019, there were approximately 21,000,000 individuals in the United States aged 18 or older in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction;

Whereas the estimated total cost to the economy of prescription opioid misuse is \$78,500,000,000 annually, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, and involvement of the criminal justice system;

Whereas individuals with substance use disorder may face stigma from health professionals, as well as friends and family;

Whereas it has been demonstrated that stigma can be a barrier for individuals with substance use disorder to accessing treatment and engaging in recovery; and

Whereas peer-supported communities offer individuals with substance use disorder better success in recovery by addressing the personal and emotional effects of addiction and easing reintegration: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the importance of education for the prevention of substance use disorder;

(2) supports efforts to explore the means by which integrated care, community, and sense of purpose can lead to effective and sustainable treatment of substance use disorder; and

(3) shows appreciation and gratitude for family members, friends, and other individuals who support individuals in recovery from substance use disorder.

SENATE RESOLUTION 390—EX-PRESSING APPRECIATION FOR THE STATE OF QATAR'S EFFORTS TO ASSIST THE UNITED STATES DURING OPERATION ALLIES REFUGE

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.:

S. RES. 390

Whereas thousands of United States citizens, lawful permanent residents, vulnerable Afghans, and their families sought refuge following the Afghan Taliban's takeover of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan;

Whereas the State of Qatar played a critical role in assisting the United States in evacuating thousands of people from the rule of the Afghan Taliban regime;

Whereas Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar served as a central transportation hub for many evacuees desperately seeking to exit Afghanistan; and

Whereas Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin stated, “Qatar's support for Operation Allies Refuge was indispensable to the safe transit of Americans and U.S. personnel, allies, partners and Afghans at special risk.”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) thanks the State of Qatar for their pivotal role and support of Operation Allies Refuge; and

(2) appreciates the State of Qatar's support to temporarily house thousands of evacuees until they are cleared for follow-on movement.

SENATE RESOLUTION 391—EX-PRESSING CONCERN ABOUT THE RISE IN ILLICIT MINING AND TRAFFICKING OF GOLD IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE PERVERSIVE PROBLEM THAT SUCH MINING POSES FOR THE SECURITY, STABILITY, AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE REGION

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. KAINE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.:

S. RES 391

Whereas during the 10-year period immediately preceding the date of enactment of this Resolution, Latin America has witnessed an alarming increase in the illicit mining and trafficking of gold and other valuable minerals;

Whereas illicit gold mining is a significant challenge across Latin America, specifically in the Andean and Amazonian regions, where, according to the internationally recognized nongovernmental organization Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime—

(1) Venezuela leads the region with approximately 90 percent of the gold extracted in that country being mined illicitly;

(2) Colombia and Ecuador closely follow with approximately 80 percent of the gold extracted in those countries being mined illicitly; and

(3) nearly 30 percent of the gold extracted in Bolivia and Peru is mined illicitly;

Whereas illicit gold mining involves the extraction of gold in violation of the laws of the country in which the activity occurs and mostly takes place in remote geographic areas with limited government presence, leaving opportunities for transnational criminal organizations to exploit this practice to generate billions of dollars in illicit profits to bolster their strength and long-term viability;

Whereas the profits derived from illicit gold mining have become a leading source of the illicit financial activities in the region, surpassing the profits generated by coca and cocaine production in recent years;

Whereas transnational criminal organizations use illicit gold trafficking as a mechanism to launder profits from other illicit activities, which frequently threatens the national security of the United States and undermines legal international trade by compromising the lawful gold supply chain and exploiting the United States financial system for illegal gain;

Whereas the presence of transnational criminal organizations in mining and trading chains of gold and other valuable minerals profoundly threatens the safety, security, and cultural integrity of indigenous communities across Latin America;

Whereas illicit gold mining often devastates the environment and is destructive to rural and indigenous communities since it violates legal standards and safety requirements and often involves the illegal use of mercury, a potent toxin that, when used improperly, contaminates water supplies in the areas surrounding illicit mining sites, and can result in acute and long-term poisoning in people;

Whereas the recent activities associated with illicit gold mining include cutting down rainforests and creating pools of stagnant water, which contribute to the spread of mosquitoes and insect-borne disease, inciting an epidemic of malaria in Venezuela at levels not seen in the past 75 years;

Whereas in May 2016, former President of Peru, Ollanta Humala, declared a 60-day emergency in the Madre de Dios region near Peru's southeastern border with Brazil in an attempt to curb high levels of mercury poisoning of residents due to the impacts of illicit gold mining;

Whereas, on February 24, 2016, the authoritarian government of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela enacted a decree that announced a new legal framework for open mining under the name of “Orinoco Mining Arc” as a means to diversify the regime's cash flow, an action done without the approval of the democratically elected National Assembly, as required by Venezuela's Constitution;

Whereas the Orinoco Mining Arc decree can impact the mercury content in waters in southern Venezuela and devastate the unique ecosystems of the Amazon, including World Heritage Site Canaima National Park, which is the ancestral land of the Pemón indigenous people and where at least 59 mining sites have been detected;

Whereas corruption and the weak rule of law in Venezuela has allowed transnational criminal organizations, drug trafficking organizations, insurgent groups, and other armed groups to control and financially benefit from illicit mining operations, many of which have exerted control over different parts of the Orinoco Mining Arc region and beyond, such as Yapacana National Park and the Alto Orinoco-Casiquiare Biosphere Reserve, home to indigenous communities of 17 ethnic groups, including the Yanomami and Ye'kuana tribes;

Whereas, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, more than 500,000 workers are involved in mining operations in Venezuela, of whom—

(1) approximately 45 percent are underage; and

(2) the majority are from indigenous communities who were coerced into working through threats of violence;

Whereas the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, in a September 2021 report, expressed concern that the flow of all the gold produced within Venezuela, which is estimated to total as much as 75 tons per year, with a market value of more than \$4,400,000,000, has a high risk of contributing to serious human rights abuses, direct or indirect support for non-state armed groups, corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion;

Whereas Executive Order 13850, which was issued on November 1, 2018, sanctioned individuals involved in illicit gold operations that propped up the illegitimate regime of Nicolás Maduro;

Whereas the United States signed Memorandums of Understanding with the governments of Peru and Colombia in 2017 and 2018, respectively, in an effort to combat illicit mining and minimize its negative impacts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses deep concern about the threat that illicit gold mining in Latin America poses for the security, stability, and environment of the region;

(2) recognizes the threat that illicit gold mining in Latin America poses for the national security of the United States;

(3) supports the rights of the rural and indigenous populations that have been deeply affected by illicit gold mining practices in the region;

(4) supports the efforts of the United States Government to expand bilateral cooperation with the governments of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru to combat illicit gold mining;

(5) condemns the Maduro regime for directly and indirectly facilitating illicit mining of gold and other minerals in Venezuela;

(6) denounces the Maduro regime's involvement in illicit mining practices in the Amazonas and Bolívar states, which have led to human rights abuses, destruction of indigenous social fabric, deforestation, habitat loss, environmental degradation, and a rise in cases of malaria and other related diseases in Venezuela;

(7) calls for better regional and international coordination among government and industry actors to monitor and mitigate the environmental, human rights, and security risks posed by gold flows out of Venezuela; and

(8) encourages efforts to promote legal, regulated, and sustainable mining practices in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela after democratic order is restored.

SENATE RESOLUTION 392—RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCE WEEK

Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. WARNOCK) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 392

Whereas the Senate is committed to the use of forensic science in the investigation of crimes, the prosecution and conviction of the correct perpetrators of crimes, and the exoneration of innocent individuals falsely accused of crimes in the United States;

Whereas forensic science service providers address critical questions in civil and criminal investigations and trials in the United States, including by providing scientific conclusions relating to forensic evidence;

Whereas forensic science service providers partner with—

(1) Federal agencies to build and maintain criminal databases relating to latent prints, DNA, and other information relevant to criminal cases; and

(2) Federal, State, and local agencies to ensure public safety;

Whereas forensic science service providers serve a vital role in the criminal justice system by providing scientific information to investigators and officers of the court; and

Whereas the fourth week in September 2021 is recognized as “National Forensic Science Week”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Forensic Science Week; and

(2) recognizes that National Forensic Science Week provides a special opportunity for—

(A) forensic science service providers to—

(i) acknowledge the contributions of forensic scientists in the laboratories in which those individuals work;

(ii) organize community events to encourage a better understanding of forensic science;

(iii) provide tours to Federal, State, and local policymakers to assist those individuals in gaining better insight into the current capabilities of forensic science service providers and the future demands that forensic science service providers will face; and

(iv) contact and invite local media outlets to cover events hosted during National Forensic Science Week;

(B) local policymakers to—

(i) recognize, through formal commendation or resolution, the contributions of local forensic science laboratories to the communities of those policymakers;

(ii) formally declare the fourth week of September 2021 to be “National Forensic Science Week” by proclamation;

(iii) visit local forensic science laboratories to gain an understanding of the capabilities and needs of those laboratories; and

(iv) discuss the operational needs of State and local forensic science laboratories;

(C) individuals in the United States, including members of the media, to—

(i) attend community events sponsored by local forensic science laboratories;

(ii) take tours of local forensic science laboratories; and

(iii) ask local forensic science laboratories about the operational and legislative needs of those laboratories;

(D) members of the media to highlight local news stories that focus on the work of local forensic science laboratories in the communities that those laboratories serve; and

(E) public safety officers, law enforcement officers, and officers of the court to—

(i) attend community events sponsored by local forensic science laboratories;

(ii) take tours of local forensic science laboratories;

(iii) discuss the operational needs of State and local forensic science laboratories; and

(iv) engage with local forensic science laboratories about working together more effectively.

SENATE RESOLUTION 393—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2021 AS “NATIONAL SPINAL CORD INJURY AWARENESS MONTH”

Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 393

Whereas approximately 296,000 individuals in the United States live with spinal cord injuries, which cost society billions of dollars in health care costs and lost wages;

Whereas there are approximately 17,900 new spinal cord injuries in the United States each year;

Whereas more than 42,000 individuals with spinal cord injuries are veterans;

Whereas motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of spinal cord injuries;

Whereas nearly half of all spinal cord injuries to individuals 30 years of age or younger occur as a result of a motor vehicle accident;

Whereas the average remaining years of life for individuals living with spinal cord injuries has not improved significantly since the 1980s;

Whereas there is an urgent need to develop new neuroprotection, pharmacological, and regeneration treatments to reduce, prevent, and reverse paralysis; and

Whereas increased education and investment in research are key factors in improving outcomes for individuals with spinal cord injuries, enhancing the quality of life of individuals with spinal cord injuries, and ultimately curing paralysis: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2021 as “National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month”;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month;

(3) continues to support research to find better treatments, therapies, and a cure for spinal cord injuries;

(4) supports clinical trials for new therapies that offer promise and hope to individuals living with paralysis and their families; and

(5) commends the dedication of national, regional, and local organizations, researchers, doctors, volunteers, and people across the United States who are working to improve the quality of life of individuals living with spinal cord injuries and their families.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I have a request for 7 committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL SPENDING OVERSIGHT AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency Management of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCE WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 392, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 392) recognizing and supporting the goals and ideals of National Forensic Science Week.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 392) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.
(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL SPINAL CORD INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 393, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 393) designating September 2021 as "National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 393) was agreed to.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The preamble was agreed to.
(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME EN BLOC—S. 2868, H.R. 3755, AND H.R. 5323

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I understand that there are three bills at

the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2868) to temporarily extend the public debt limit until December 16, 2022.

A bill (H.R. 3755) to protect a person's ability to determine whether to continue or end a pregnancy, and to protect a health care provider's ability to provide abortion services.

A bill (H.R. 5323) making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. I now ask for a second reading, and I object to my own request, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bills will be read for a second time on the next legislative day.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, and in consultation with the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Finance, pursuant to Public Law 103–296, appoints the following individual as a member of the Social Security Advisory Board: Mr. Jagadeesh Gokhale of Pennsylvania.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, September 29; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Lewis nomination and that, at 10:30 a.m., the Senate vote on the confirmation of the nomination; further, that upon disposition of the Lewis nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Anderson nomination; that the cloture motions filed during yesterday's session ripen at 2:30 p.m.; and that the cloture vote on the Meyer nomination occur immediately after the cloture vote on the Anderson nomination; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed on Wednesday, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:52 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, September 29, 2021, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

CLARE E. CONNORS, OF HAWAII, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE KENJI M. PRICE, RESIGNED.

ZACHARY A. CUNHA, OF RHODE ISLAND, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE AARON L. WEISMAN, RESIGNED.

MICHAEL F. EASLEY, JR., OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ROBERT J. HIGDON, JR., RESIGNED.

COLE FINEGAN, OF COLORADO, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE JASON R. DUNN, RESIGNED.

SANDRA J. HAIRSTON, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE MATTHEW G.T. MARTIN, RESIGNED.

NIKOLAS P. KEREST, OF VERMONT, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF VERMONT FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE CHRISTINA E. NOLAN, RESIGNED.

DENA J. KING, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE R. ANDREW MURRAY, RESIGNED.

KENNETH L. PARKER, OF OHIO, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE DAVID M. DEVILLERS, RESIGNED.

DELIA L. SMITH, OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE RONALD W. SHARPE, RESIGNED.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate September 27, 2021:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOUGLAS R. BUSH, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, VICE BRUCE D. JETTE. CARRIE FRANCES RICCI, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, VICE JAMES E. MCPHERSON, RESIGNED.

ASHISH S. VAZIRANI, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE LAURA JUNOR, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

SHANNON CORLESS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYSIS, DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, VICE ISABEL MARIE KEENAN PATELUNAS.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, AND APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 9039:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. RANDALL E. KITCHENS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be major

GLORIA A. EZE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL

TRAVIS J. BURNS

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JOSEPH J. ENDREOLA

IN THE SPACE FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

BRIAN P. MOORE

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by
the Senate September 28, 2021:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TODD D. ROBINSON, OF NEW JERSEY, A CAREER MEM-
BER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CA-

REER MINISTER, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
STATE (INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCE-
MENT AFFAIRS).

MONICA P. MEDINA, OF MARYLAND, TO BE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR OCEANS AND INTER-
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS.

MARY CATHERINE PHEE, OF ILLINOIS, A CAREER MEM-
BER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MIN-

ISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE (AFRICAN AFFAIRS).

KAREN ERIKA DONFRIED, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUM-
BIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (EURO-
PEAN AFFAIRS AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS).